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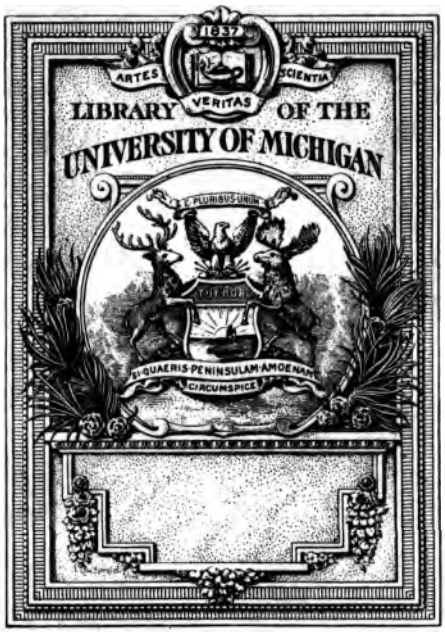
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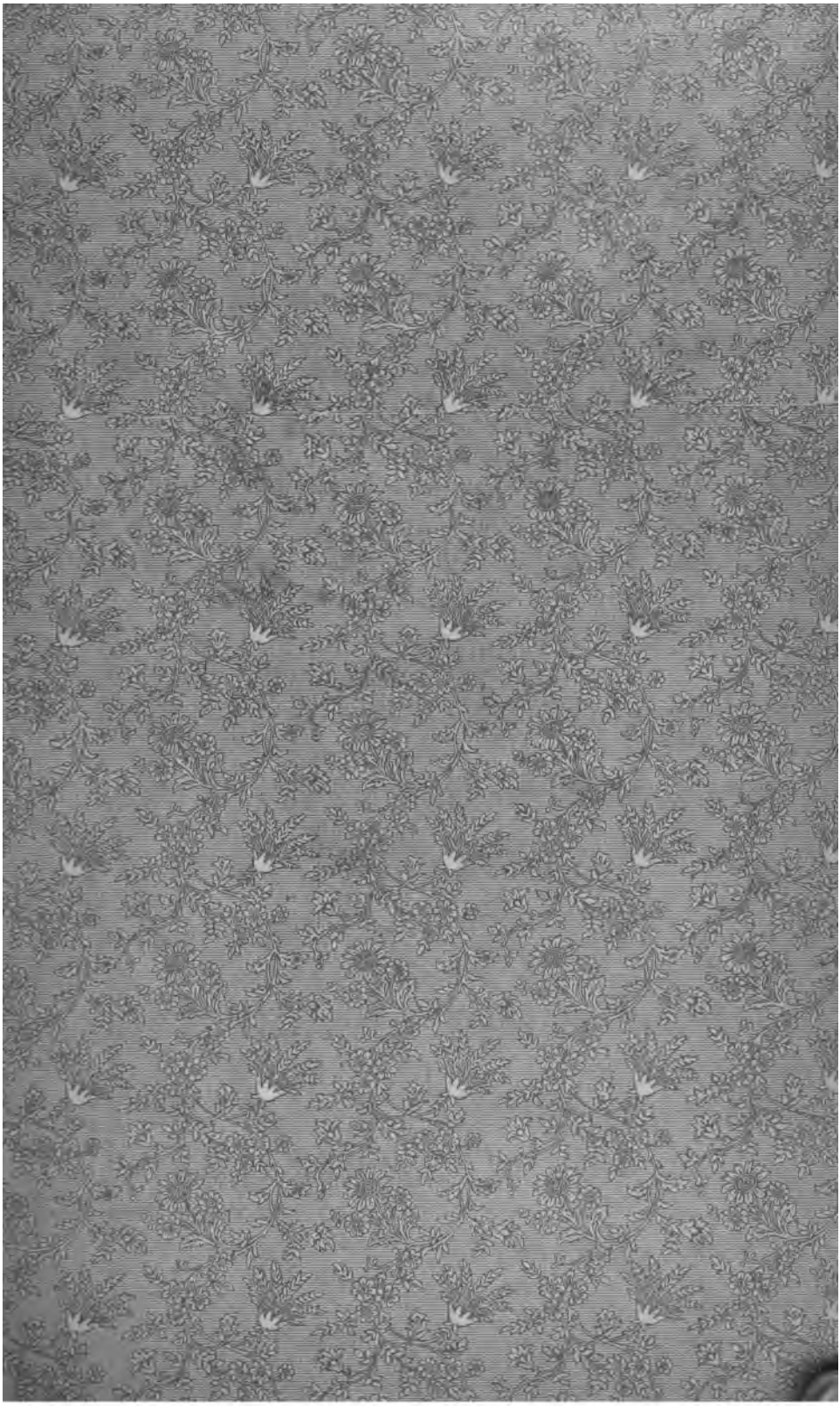

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London
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"This historical study contains many hitherto unpublished details concerning the life of Napoleon's second wife, and is invested, by the charm of the author's style, with all the interest of a romance. The volume commences at the birth of the Empress and continues the story of her career down to the opening of the Russian campaign. The work gives a complete picture of the Courts of Austria and France during the brilliant but deceptive period of her husband's highest glory. In referring to this period in after years at St. Helena, Napoleon is reported to have said: 'Marie-Louise's reign was not a long one, but she must have enjoyed it while it lasted, seeing that all the world was at her feet'"—*Galignani's Messenger* on the French Edition of these Memoirs.

INTRODUCTION.

In 1814, while Napoleon was in exile in the Island of Elba, the Empress Marie Louise and her grandmother, the Queen of Naples, Marie Caroline, were together in Vienna. The one, deprived of the Crown of France, was demanding possession of her new State, the Duchy of Parma; the other, who had fled from Sicily to escape from the yoke of her pretended protectors, the English, had come to claim the restitution of her kingdom of Naples, where Murat continued to reign with the connivance of Austria. This Queen, Marie Caroline, daughter of the great Empress Marie Thérèse, and sister of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette, had spent her life in hatred of the French Revolution, and of Napoleon, one of whose most celebrated victims she was. Well, at the very moment when the Austrian Court was labouring to the utmost extent of its power

to make Marie Louise forget that she was the wife of Napoleon, and to separate her from him for ever, Marie Caroline was suffering keenly from the spectacle of her granddaughter's docile acceptance of such suggestions. She said to the Baron de Méneval, who had accompanied Marie Louise to Vienna, "I have in days gone by had to complain of your Emperor; he has persecuted me and wounded my self-esteem—I was fifteen years younger then—but to-day I remember one thing alone —that he is in misfortune." She added that if there should be any opposition to the reunion of the married couple, Marie Louise ought to make a rope of her bed-clothes, and in disguise escape through the window. "That," she exclaimed, "is what I should do in her place; for marriage is for life!"

If a woman like Queen Marie Caroline, a sister of Marie Antoinette, a Queen driven out of her kingdom by Napoleon, could entertain such sentiments, we may readily understand the severity with which the French, devoted to the Emperor, judged the conduct of his ungrateful and forgetful wife. In the same degree that Josephine, despite her frailties, remained popular even after her divorce, because she was tender, good, and devoted, Marie Louise was criticised because, after having loved, or professed to love, the all-powerful Emperor, she abandoned the captive. The contrast between her conduct and that of the wife of King Jerome, the noble and courageous Catherine of Würtemberg,

who braved every threat and persecution in order to share the exile and poverty of her husband, made the errors of Marie Louise stand out in still greater prominence. She was reproached for not having joined Napoleon in the Island of Elba, for not having even made an attempt to alleviate the sufferings of the glorious captive of St. Helena, for not having consoled him, and for not having even written to him. The whilom Empress of the French has, perhaps, been still more severely reproached on account of her two morganatic marriages, one with the Count de Neipperg, an Austrian General, and a determined antagonist of Napoleon; the other with the Count de Bombelles, a Frenchman who had renounced France in order to enter the service of Austria. Marie Louise most assuredly was not a model wife; still less was she a model widow, and there is consequently nothing astonishing in the severity of the judgments which her contemporaries passed upon her, and which history doubtless will confirm. But if this Princess was to blame, more than one extenuating circumstance may be pleaded in her favour, and it must, in common justice, be borne in mind that it was not without inward struggles, tears, anxieties, and qualms of conscience, that she resolved upon obeying the inflexible orders of her father, and becoming once more, purely and simply, what she was before her marriage, an Austrian Princess.

Neither must it be forgotten that the Empress

Marie Louise, the twofold grand-niece of Queen Marie Antoinette, by her mother, Marie Thérèse of Naples, daughter of Queen Marie Caroline, and by her father, the Emperor Francis, son of the Emperor Leopold II., brother of the martyred Queen, had been brought up to a horror of the French Revolution, and of its sequel, the Empire. Even as she left her cradle she had been taught that France was the hereditary enemy, the determined and irreconcilable adversary of her country. When she was yet a child Napoleon appeared to her in a distant horizon as a fatal being, an evil spirit, a devilish Corsican, a species of Antichrist. So far as Frenchmen were concerned, none were to be met at the Court of Vienna except refugees who looked upon Napoleon as an Imperial revolutionary, the friend of young Robespierre, the *protégé* of Barras, the saviour of the members of the Convention, the man of the 13th of Vendemiaire, the murderer of the Duc d'Enghien, the enemy of all the thrones of Europe, the author of the Bayonne trap, the persecutor of the Pope, the excommunicated Sovereign. On two separate occasions he had pushed Austria to the verge of destruction, and it had even been said that he would fain see her disappear entirely like a second Poland. In regard to the victor of Austerlitz and Wagram the young Archduchess had heard no words but those inspired by resentment, fear, and hatred. Was it, then, at all possible that she in a single day should become

enamoured of the man who had for so long been represented to her as a modern Attila, and the scourge of God? Moreover, from the very moment that a marriage with this man was vaguely suggested to her, she had a feeling of surprise, fright, and repulsion, and her first idea was that she must look upon herself as a victim sacrificed to a Minotaur of some sort. And this word "sacrifice" was also in the mouths of those Austrian politicians who were most favourable to the French alliance, the very men who advised and carried out the marriage. Did not the Prince de Schwarzenberg, the Austrian Ambassador in Paris, write to M. de Metternich, on the 8th of February, 1810: "I am sorry for the Princess, but she must remember how great a service it is to restore peace to such noble nations." And M. de Metternich wrote, on the 15th of the same month, to the Prince de Schwarzenberg: "The Archduchess Marie Louise, in the overtures which her father has made with a view to her alliance with Napoleon, sees only another means of proving her absolute devotion to that beloved father. She feels all the severity of the sacrifice, but her filial love will prevail over all other considerations." Brought up to be accustomed to severe discipline and passive obedience, she belonged to a family in which the Austrian Princesses were regarded as docile instruments of the greatness of the Hapsburgs. She resigned herself, therefore, to the

will of her father without a murmur, but not without regret. What Marie Louise thought at the moment when her marriage was concluded, she still thought during the last years of her life. General de Trobriand, the Frenchman who distinguished himself under the American flag during the War of Secession, recently mentioned to me that he had been painfully surprised on hearing, at Naples, the widow of Napoleon, then the wife of M. de Bombelles, say to him in reference to her marriage with the great Emperor, "I was sacrificed."

Austria was a mass of ruins, her hospitals were filled to overflowing with French and Austrian wounded, and the infernal echo of the guns of Wagram was still ringing in the ears of the Viennese when salvoes of artillery once more resounded, no longer in token of war, but in honour of Hymen. The reminiscences of a bloody struggle, a struggle which on both sides had been looked upon as a duel to the death, were too recent and too terrible to allow of a complete reconciliation between the two nations. In reality, the peace was nothing more than a truce. The very bridge which was hastily constructed to facilitate the solemn entry of the Ambassador Extraordinary of Napoleon into Vienna, was built on the ruins of the ramparts which the French, a few months previously, had blown up as a farewell to the population. Marie Louise, who set out on her journey with tears in her

eyes, went in fear and trembling towards the land of France which had been so fatal to Marie Antoinette.

This first impression was speedily weakened, and the young Empress was to a certain extent pleased with the brilliancy which radiated round her throne, the most dazzling in the world. But in the midst of all this Babylonian pomp, and the splendours, illusions, and adulation, so calculated to flatter the pride of a woman, her thoughts nevertheless turned incessantly towards her German fatherland. One day, as she was standing at one of the windows of her Château de Saint Cloud, and was pensively contemplating the horizon stretched out before her, M. de Méneval ventured to ask the reason of the profound reverie in which she seemed to be lost. She replied that when she gazed on the lovely view which unfolded itself before her eyes, she was surprised to find that she regretted the landscape which surrounded Vienna, and ardently longed for a magic ring to show her even a tiny corner of it. At that time Marie Louise dreaded lest she should never see her fatherland again, and sighed by reason of her dread. What glory or what grandeur is there that can obliterate the touching memories of childhood?

Napoleon undoubtedly overwhelmed his young wife with evidences of his regard and forethought. But in the sentiment of affection which he inspired in her, there was, we imagine, more admiration than tender-

ness. The man was too great for her. She was fascinated, but troubled, by so much power and genius. She had the eyes of a dove, and she needed the eyes of an eagle to enable her to gaze on the face of this imperial sun, whose burning rays dazzled her. She, whose simple and modest tastes were those of a citizen rather than of a sovereign, would have preferred less splendour, less majesty, and fewer triumphs. Surrounded by courtiers who had the air of priests adoring their idol, her redoubtable husband seemed to her more like a demi-god than a man. She would have preferred to be less overpowered, and more deeply touched.

It must not, however, be supposed that, previously to the catastrophes which brought about the fall of the Empire, Marie Louise was unhappy. She was sincere when, in her letters to her father, she sang the praises of her spouse, and her joy was heartfelt when she gave to the world a child whose birth seemed to be an earnest of peace and goodwill to mankind. We must add, too, that the Emperor never had cause to address her in terms of reproach. Gentle, reserved, and obedient, she united in herself all the qualities her husband desired. Never in his dreams had he pictured an Empress more to his taste. Later on, when abandoned by her, we shall see him seeking to excuse her and pity her, instead of blaming her; regarding her as the slave and victim of the Court of Vienna;

and ignoring, moreover, the love she felt for the Count de Neipperg. No feeling of jealousy will trouble him on the rock of St. Helena. "Rest assured," we shall find him saying a few days before he died, "that if the Empress makes no effort to alleviate my misfortunes, it is because she is purposely surrounded by spies who prevent her knowing anything about all that I am made to suffer; for Marie Louise is virtue itself." It was a sweet error, and robbed the end of this great man, whose latest thoughts were of his wife and son, of much of its cruelty.

In regard to the Emperor of Austria, we are inclined to believe that at the outset of his daughter's marriage he was quite sincere in his protestations of devotion and friendship for Napoleon. At that time he had no idea, in any shape or form, of either dethroning him or fighting him. He hoped to derive the greatest advantage from the French alliance, and he would have heen considerably astonished if anybody had predicted to him that at the expiration of so short a period he would become one of the most active agents in the ruin of his son-in-law, towards whom he was evidencing such feelings of affection. In 1811 he was sincerely desirous that his grandson and godchild, the King of Rome, should one day succeed Napoleon on the throne of his immense Empire. The anti-French feeling in Austria had then almost died

out. It only revived from the date of the disasters in the Russian campaign. The Austrians, who could not have completely forgotten the past, did not care sufficiently for Napoleon to remain faithful to him when they saw him abandoned by fortune. Surrounded by the halo of success, the victor of Wagram would have retained the sympathy of his father-in-law and the Austrian alliance. In misfortune, he was destined to lose all at one fell blow. Unlike monarchs of ancient lineage, he was condemned either to perpetual victory or to downfall. In default of ancestors, he needed triumphs; the least diminution of prestige was in his case the herald of irremediable decadence; only on condition of unvarying success could he guard his throne, his wife, or even his son. One day he asked Marie Louise what instructions she had received from her parents relative to her conduct towards him. "To be entirely yours, and to obey you in all things." Might she not have added—"So long as you avoid misfortune?"

But who, at the beginning of the fatal year 1812, could have predicted such imminent catastrophes? When Marie Louise was at Napoleon's side in Dresden, did he not appear to her as the arbiter of the world, the invincible hero, a veritable Agamemnon, a king of kings? Never, perhaps, had any man attained to so lofty an eminence. The other sovereigns seemed to be lost in the crowd of his courtiers.

months without him, from the 29th of May to the 12th of December, 1812. He set out again for the seat of war on the 15th of April, 1813, and did not return until the 9th of November. The Sovereigns of Europe, even had they been so minded, could not have remained faithful to their alliance with him, so irresistible was the animus of their subjects against him. After Leipsic all was lost. It was the herald of the last agony—an agony long, terrible, and replete with struggling and anguish. Terrified Europe resounded with the death-bed shrieks of the expiring Empire. But the deed was done, and France, that holy land, was invaded. On the 25th of January, 1814, at three o'clock in the morning, the giant of battle sallied forth from the Tuileries to stem the tide of invasion. He embraced his wife and son for the last time. He never saw them again. In all, Napoleon only spent two years and eight months with Marie Louise. She had scarcely time to become attached to him.

Never was more consummate grandeur followed by more complete disaster. "Listen, son of man, you far-seeing man who to far-distant centuries unfolds the precautions of thy prudence, God himself speaks to you, and confounds your vain thoughts by the mouth of His prophet Ezekiel. 'Behold,' says the holy prophet, 'the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an

high stature: and his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the fields. Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches; for his root was by great waters. That was a great fortune, but see its ruin and downfall. Because it was set up on high, and its top was among the clouds, for that reason, says the Lord, I will bring him down with a high hand; disgrace shall befall him, and he shall no longer sustain himself; great shall be his fall. All those who rest beneath his shade shall fall away from him lest they should be overwhelmed in his ruin. He shall be seen lying at full length on the mountain, a useless burden on the earth.' "*

The sword of Napoleon was broken. He appeared before Paris too late to save the capital, which had just capitulated. The foreigners were on the point of making their triumphal entry. How could a woman of twenty-two have had strength enough to withstand

* Bossuet, "Sermon contre l'Ambition.

the storm? If she had possessed the courage, could she have remained in Paris without disobeying Napoleon? Was not flight obligatory upon, and the duty of the unfortunate Sovereign? The Emperor had written to his brother Joseph: "Under any circumstances you must not allow the Empress and the King of Rome to fall into the hands of the enemy. Do not leave my son, and remember that I would rather see him in the Seine than in the hands of the enemies of France. The fate of Astyanax, a prisoner with the Greeks, has always seemed to me the most unhappy fate in history." Alas! in spite of the precautions of the great Emperor, his father, the King of Rome, was doomed by fate to be a modern Astyanax, but Marie Louise was not destined to display the fidelity of Andromache!

The allied troops drew near. There was but time to fly. On the 29th of March, 1814, from early morning the carriages stood ready in the Carrousel. At seven o'clock Marie Louise was dressed and ready to start. There were those who wished her to wait awhile. They were vaguely expecting some good news which would obviate her departure, some envoy from Napoleon, some messenger from King Joseph. The officers of the Garde Nationale would fain have detained the Empress. "Remain," they said to her; "we swear to defend you." She thanked them amid tears. But the order of the Emperor was explicit. At any cost

the Empress and the King of Rome were to be saved from the hands of the enemy. The danger was imminent. For four hours Marie Louise, still awaiting the unexpected, postponed her departure from moment to moment. Eleven o'clock struck. The Minister of War arrived, and exclaimed that not a moment was to be lost. The little King of Rome, just three years of age, seemed to have a presentiment already that if he set out, he would never come back again. "Do not go to Rambouillet," he said to his mother. "It is a nasty place. Let us stay here." And the child clung to the rail of the staircase and, struggling in the arms of the footman who was carrying him, shouted amid his tears, "I do not want to leave my house. I do not want to go away. Now that papa is not here I am master." Marie Louise was much struck by this childish resistance. An inner voice told her that the child was right, and that to leave the capital was to deliver it into the hands of the Royalists. But the die was cast. Departure was inevitable. Only a few casual bystanders, actuated by curiosity alone, witnessed the flight of the Sovereign who, four years previously, had made her solemn entry into this same palace of the Tuileries under a triumphal arch amid such tumultuous applause. Not a tear was there in the eyes of those sparse spectators. Not a sound came from their lips. No movement was there of sympathy or regret. Nothing but gloomy silence. One alone

wept, and that was Marie Louise. When she reached the Champs Elysées she turned a last look—a melancholy glance—on the fateful palace she was never to see again. It was not a flight, it was a funeral ceremony.

The Empress and the King of Rome took refuge at Blois, amid whose shadows was dimly seen some phantom sort of imperial government. On the 8th of April, Good Friday, Count Schouvaloff arrived at Blois with a detachment of Cossacks, to conduct Marie Louise and her son to Rambouillet, where the Emperor of Austria was to join them.

On the 16th of April the Emperor of Austria arrived at Blois. Marie Louise, who, two years previously, on the occasion of her triumphal journey to Prague, had left her father amid surroundings of brilliant adulation, saw him once more with profound emotion, and threw the King of Rome in his arms as if to reproach him with having abandoned the child's cause. The grandfather was melted, but the monarch was implacable. Did he not soon afterwards say to Marie Louise: "As my daughter, all I have is yours, even my blood and my life; as a Sovereign, I do not know you." The Russian sentries at the gates of Rambouillet were relieved by Austrian Grenadiers. The Empress of the French had but changed the description of her captivity; she was a prisoner, no longer of the soldiers of the Czar, but of her own father. She

reproached herself bitterly—for the conjugal feeling was not yet entirely extinct in her soul—for not having followed Napoleon to Fontainebleau. But scruples of this kind are proverbially easy to allay. A promise was made to her that she should ere long rejoin her husband in the Island of Elba. She was told that by a recently signed treaty she had acquired for herself, and after her for her son, the Duchies of Parma, Plaisance, and Guastalla; that the King of Rome was therefore already the hereditary Duke of Parma; that if she had her duties as a wife, she also had her duties as a mother; and that she ought to conciliate the goodwill of the Powers, and assure the future of her child. She was also told that she ought to give her husband time to settle down in the island of Elba; and that, in the meantime, she would be able to secure at Vienna, in her native land, beside her parents who were so fond of her, a few weeks of moral and physical repose which were indispensable to her after so much emotion and grief. Marie Louise, brought up in ideas of passive and absolute obedience to her father, looked upon the advice of the Emperor of Austria as so many orders beyond the pale of discussion. And on the 23rd of April, she left Rambouillet with her son on her way to Vienna.

Did the dethroned Empress carry away with her a kindly recollection of France and the French? We do not think so. And, indeed, can it be said that the

events through which she had passed were calculated to give her a very favourable idea of the country she was leaving? Could she feel any great affection for the people who were harnessed to a rope intended to drag the statue of the conqueror of Austerlitz from its pedestal on the Vendôme column? When the Emperor Francis, the father of Marie Louise, was conquered and driven from his capital, overwhelmed by the blows of fortune, his misfortunes had no other result than an increase of his popularity. The more he suffered, the more he was beloved. And Napoleon, so worshipped in the days of his triumph—how did his people treat him in the hour of defeat? What sort of language was then indulged in by the Senate, hitherto so obsequious and servile? What epoch has ever witnessed such an amount of recantation and meanness? Did not the very men whom the Emperor had covered, overwhelmed, with kindness, disdainfully dub him Monsieur de Buonaparte? What did they do to save the crown of that King of Rome whose cradle they had saluted with such effusive demonstrations of joy? Were not the Cossacks, who went to Blois in search of the Empress, cheered to the echo on the very boulevards, in the heart of Paris, by Frenchmen? Did not the Marshals of the Empire afterwards serve as escort to Louis XVIII? Where were the eagles? Where the flags and the tri-coloured cockades? Napoleon, as he wended his way to his

suffering. It was half-past eleven at night. The lady-in-waiting, whose duty it was to pass the night in a room adjoining that of the Sovereign, was about to close all the doors when suddenly she heard voices in the drawing-room beyond. Who could it be at such an hour? Who indeed but the Emperor himself. And, as a matter of fact, it was he—that instant arrived, unexpectedly and without having warned any one of his intention, in a shabby carriage, having succeeded with great difficulty in gaining access to his own residence. Since the passage of the Beresina he had been travelling incognito as a fugitive and an outlaw. When he passed Warsaw he exclaimed bitterly, and in astonishment at his defeats, "From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but a step!" Yes, it was indeed he. When, wrapped in a fur mantle, he hurriedly entered the bedroom of his wife, Marie Louise could not believe her eyes. He embraced her most warmly. He promised her that all the disasters enumerated in the 29th despatch would be easily repaired. He added that he had been conquered, not by the Russians, but by the elements. Nevertheless, the downfall had begun. The zenith had been reached. Marie Louise no longer believed in Napoleon. The courtiers flattered still, but they no longer adored. Above the Tuileries hovered a lowering cloud. The Empress had but a few days to spend beside her husband. She had just been nearly six

months without him, from the 29th of May to the 12th of December, 1812. He set out again for the seat of war on the 15th of April, 1813, and did not return until the 9th of November. The Sovereigns of Europe, even had they been so minded, could not have remained faithful to their alliance with him, so irresistible was the animus of their subjects against him. After Leipsic all was lost. It was the herald of the last agony—an agony long, terrible, and replete with struggling and anguish. Terrified Europe resounded with the death-bed shrieks of the expiring Empire. But the deed was done, and France, that holy land, was invaded. On the 25th of January, 1814, at three o'clock in the morning, the giant of battle sallied forth from the Tuileries to stem the tide of invasion. He embraced his wife and son for the last time. He never saw them again. In all, Napoleon only spent two years and eight months with Marie Louise. She had scarcely time to become attached to him.

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high stature: and his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the fields. Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches; for his root was by great waters. That was a great fortune, but see its ruin and downfall. Because it was set up on high, and its top was among the clouds, for that reason, says the Lord, I will bring him down with a high hand; disgrace shall befall him, and he shall no longer sustain himself; great shall be his fall. All those who rest beneath his shade shall fall away from him lest they should be overwhelmed in his ruin. He shall be seen lying at full length on the mountain, a useless burden on the earth.' "*

The sword of Napoleon was broken. He appeared before Paris too late to save the capital, which had just capitulated. The foreigners were on the point of making their triumphal entry. How could a woman of twenty-two have had strength enough to withstand

* Bossuet, "Sermon contre l'Ambition.

the storm? If she had possessed the courage, could she have remained in Paris without disobeying Napoleon? Was not flight obligatory upon, and the duty of the unfortunate Sovereign? The Emperor had written to his brother Joseph: "Under any circumstances you must not allow the Empress and the King of Rome to fall into the hands of the enemy. Do not leave my son, and remember that I would rather see him in the Seine than in the hands of the enemies of France. The fate of Astyanax, a prisoner with the Greeks, has always seemed to me the most unhappy fate in history." Alas! in spite of the precautions of the great Emperor, his father, the King of Rome, was doomed by fate to be a modern Astyanax, but Marie Louise was not destined to display the fidelity of Andromache!

The allied troops drew near. There was but time to fly. On the 29th of March, 1814, from early morning the carriages stood ready in the Carrousel. At seven o'clock Marie Louise was dressed and ready to start. There were those who wished her to wait awhile. They were vaguely expecting some good news which would obviate her departure, some envoy from Napoleon, some messenger from King Joseph. The officers of the Garde Nationale would fain have detained the Empress. "Remain," they said to her; "we swear to defend you." She thanked them amid tears. But the order of the Emperor was explicit. At any cost

the Empress and the King of Rome were to be saved from the hands of the enemy. The danger was imminent. For four hours Marie Louise, still awaiting the unexpected, postponed her departure from moment to moment. Eleven o'clock struck. The Minister of War arrived, and exclaimed that not a moment was to be lost. The little King of Rome, just three years of age, seemed to have a presentiment already that if he set out, he would never come back again. "Do not go to Rambouillet," he said to his mother. "It is a nasty place. Let us stay here." And the child clung to the rail of the staircase and, struggling in the arms of the footman who was carrying him, shouted amid his tears, "I do not want to leave my house. I do not want to go away. Now that papa is not here I am master." Marie Louise was much struck by this childish resistance. An inner voice told her that the child was right, and that to leave the capital was to deliver it into the hands of the Royalists. But the die was cast. Departure was inevitable. Only a few casual bystanders, actuated by curiosity alone, witnessed the flight of the Sovereign who, four years previously, had made her solemn entry into this same palace of the Tuileries under a triumphal arch amid such tumultuous applause. Not a tear was there in the eyes of those sparse spectators. Not a sound came from their lips. No movement was there of sympathy or regret. Nothing but gloomy silence. One alone

wept, and that was Marie Louise. When she reached the Champs Elysées she turned a last look—a melancholy glance—on the fateful palace she was never to see again. It was not a flight, it was a funeral ceremony.

The Empress and the King of Rome took refuge at Blois, amid whose shadows was dimly seen some phantom sort of imperial government. On the 8th of April, Good Friday, Count Schouvaloff arrived at Blois with a detachment of Cossacks, to conduct Marie Louise and her son to Rambouillet, where the Emperor of Austria was to join them.

On the 16th of April the Emperor of Austria arrived at Blois. Marie Louise, who, two years previously, on the occasion of her triumphal journey to Prague, had left her father amid surroundings of brilliant adulation, saw him once more with profound emotion, and threw the King of Rome in his arms as if to reproach him with having abandoned the child's cause. The grandfather was melted, but the monarch was implacable. Did he not soon afterwards say to Marie Louise: "As my daughter, all I have is yours, even my blood and my life; as a Sovereign, I do not know you." The Russian sentries at the gates of Rambouillet were relieved by Austrian Grenadiers. The Empress of the French had but changed the description of her captivity; she was a prisoner, no longer of the soldiers of the Czar, but of her own father. She

reproached herself bitterly—for the conjugal feeling was not yet entirely extinct in her soul—for not having followed Napoleon to Fontainebleau. But scruples of this kind are proverbially easy to allay. A promise was made to her that she should ere long rejoin her husband in the Island of Elba. She was told that by a recently signed treaty she had acquired for herself, and after her for her son, the Duchies of Parma, Plaisance, and Guastalla; that the King of Rome was therefore already the hereditary Duke of Parma; that if she had her duties as a wife, she also had her duties as a mother; and that she ought to conciliate the goodwill of the Powers, and assure the future of her child. She was also told that she ought to give her husband time to settle down in the island of Elba; and that, in the meantime, she would be able to secure at Vienna, in her native land, beside her parents who were so fond of her, a few weeks of moral and physical repose which were indispensable to her after so much emotion and grief. Marie Louise, brought up in ideas of passive and absolute obedience to her father, looked upon the advice of the Emperor of Austria as so many orders beyond the pale of discussion. And on the 23rd of April, she left Rambouillet with her son on her way to Vienna.

Did the dethroned Empress carry away with her a kindly recollection of France and the French? We do not think so. And, indeed, can it be said that the

events through which she had passed were calculated to give her a very favourable idea of the country she was leaving? Could she feel any great affection for the people who were harnessed to a rope intended to drag the statue of the conqueror of Austerlitz from its pedestal on the Vendôme column? When the Emperor Francis, the father of Marie Louise, was conquered and driven from his capital, overwhelmed by the blows of fortune, his misfortunes had no other result than an increase of his popularity. The more he suffered, the more he was beloved. And Napoleon, so worshipped in the days of his triumph—how did his people treat him in the hour of defeat? What sort of language was then indulged in by the Senate, hitherto so obsequious and servile? What epoch has ever witnessed such an amount of recantation and meanness? Did not the very men whom the Emperor had covered, overwhelmed, with kindness, disdainfully dub him Monsieur de Buonaparte? What did they do to save the crown of that King of Rome whose cradle they had saluted with such effusive demonstrations of joy? Were not the Cossacks, who went to Blois in search of the Empress, cheered to the echo on the very boulevards, in the heart of Paris, by Frenchmen? Did not the Marshals of the Empire afterwards serve as escort to Louis XVIII? Where were the eagles? Where the flags and the tri-coloured cockades? Napoleon, as he wended his way to his

derisive sovereignty over the Island of Elba was compelled, in Provence, to adopt the uniform of an Austrian officer to escape massacre at the hands of Frenchmen—a disguise in lieu of a coronation robe. Marie Louise abandoned the French, but after the abdication of Fontainebleau, did not the French abandon both her and her child, and was it not their fault that the child was not called Napoleon II? And moreover, did not she as regent do her duty to the last? Can she be reproached with ever having for a single day entered into any compact with the allies; and if she did quit Paris at the last moment, was it not for the purpose of carrying out the formal order of her husband? Ah! might she not have truly said, just as the second Emperor fifty-six years later, when he was a prisoner in Germany, so sadly did: "In France one must not be unfortunate." What more could she do on that volcanic soil, in that land which devours all grandeur and every glory, in the midst of that versatile nation which changes its opinions and its passions as an actress changes her costumes? There, where Napoleon with all his genius failed, could an inexperienced woman, with the coalition of all Europe against her, be reasonably expected to succeed? Could her small, feeble hands possibly have strength enough to upraise again and reconstruct the colossal edifice whose ruins covered the earth?

Some such reflections as these must have crossed

the mind of Marie Louise as she withdrew from France. As soon as she set foot on the soil of her native German land, all the ideas, all the impressions, all the feelings of her childhood came back to her. And what is there astonishing in it? Have we not recently seen, on the occasion of the late war, German women married to Frenchmen, rejoicing over the successes of Germany; and Frenchwomen married to Germans lamenting over them? Marriage is but a contract, but one's country is nature. On her return to Austria Marie Louise once more found the same sympathies, the same affections that she had left on her departure. Around her was, as it were, a conspiracy to make her forget France and love Germany. The Emperor Francis, who persuaded her that he alone was her protector, swayed her with his two-fold authority as father and sovereign. The woman who only a few days previously was Empress of the French, Queen of Italy, and Regent of an immense Empire, was, face to face with her father, merely a little humble and docile girl, who told him everything, obeyed him in everything, surrendered her own free will, and promised, nay, swore that she would have no ideas and no will other than the ideas and will of her parents.

Nevertheless, at the date of her arrival in Vienna, Marie Louise was far from having completely lost all recollection of France and Napoleon. She still had Frenchmen around her; she wrote to her husband, and

was under the impression that she would be permitted to visit him in Elba. But she was none the less conscious of the difficulties of the double part she was thenceforward called upon to play. She felt that her conduct, whatsoever it might be, would be severely judged, and that it would be almost impossible for her to secure at one and the same time the approval of her father and that of her husband. As she was possessed of sufficient intelligence to divine the reproaches which would be heaped upon her by her contemporaries and posterity, could she not justly complain of her lot? She who at any other period would undoubtedly have been a thorough mother and wife—would not she be, perhaps, compelled by sheer force of circumstances to pass for a bad wife and an indifferent mother? This thought agitated Marie Louise, who at heart was not quite satisfied with herself. On the 9th of August, 1814, she wrote—"I am in a very unfortunate and very critical position; I need to be very prudent in my conduct. There are moments when this torments my brain to such an extent that I think I could not do better than die."

When Napoleon returned from Elba the position of Marie Louise, so far from being improved, became more complicated than before. She did not in the least deceive herself as to the fate that was in store for her daring husband, incapable of fighting single-handed against all Europe. She, better than anybody

else, knew that he had nothing to hope from his father-in-law, the Emperor of Austria, but that, on the contrary, he would find in that monarch a determined and implacable foe. As for the Emperor Alexander, he swore that he would spend his last rouble and sacrifice every soldier that he had, rather than allow Napoleon to rule France again. Marie Louise was too fully cognisant of the spirit which animated the Congress of Vienna to believe that her husband had the slightest chance of success. She was convinced that his return from Elba meant a fresh invasion of France and renewed captivity for himself. Herself a prisoner of the Coalition, she was condemned to be the living widow of her spouse. Seeing that it was absolutely impossible for her to escape from Vienna, it is manifestly unjust to reproach her for having remained there.

Marie Louise made one great mistake—that of writing to declare that, being entirely ignorant of the projects of the Emperor Napoleon, she placed herself under the protection of the Allies—those Allies who at that very moment were paving the way for the assassination of her husband by the famous Declaration of the 13th March, 1815, in which they said: "In violating the compact which established him in the Island of Elba, Napoleon has destroyed his sole legal title to continued existence. In reappearing in France with fresh projects of trouble and turmoil, he

himself has deprived himself of the protection of the law, and has manifested to the world that there can no longer be peace or truce with him. The Powers consequently declare that Napoleon Bonaparte is placed outside the pale of all civil and social relations, and that, as the enemy and disturber of the peace of the world, he is given up to public vengeance." On the 16th of April, when processions, organised for the purpose of invoking the Divine blessing on the Austrian arms, were parading the streets of Vienna, and pausing before the Stations in the Cathedral and the principal churches, the Empress of Austria went so far as to request the whilom Empress of the French to join the Court in these processions. Marie Louise declined this insulting proposition. On the 6th of May following, when M. de Méneval, on his return to France, came to take his leave of her and beg her instructions, she answered the faithful adherent of Napoleon, who was about to join his master, much in these terms: "I feel that henceforward all relations between me and France will cease, but I shall always remember the land of my adoption. Assure the Emperor that he has my best wishes. I hope he will appreciate my unfortunate position. I will never consent to a divorce. But I flatter myself that he will consent to a friendly separation, and that he will bear me no ill-will on that account. This separation has become indispensable, but it will in no way affect

the sentiments of esteem and gratitude which I shall always entertain towards him." She gave M. de Méneval, as a souvenir, a snuff-box ornamented with her cipher in diamonds, and left him abruptly in order to conceal the emotion which was overcoming her.

The emotion felt by Marie Louise was in no way serious, and her tears were quickly dried. In 1814 a man had crossed her path who was to make her fail in her duty towards her glorious consort. This man was twenty years older than herself, and continually wore a large black bandage to hide the scar of a wound which had cost him an eye. Both in his diplomatic and military capacity he had been one of the cleverest and most persistent enemies of Napoleon. General the Count de Neipperg—that was his name—had contributed in a marked degree to the defection from France of two Frenchmen, Bernadotte and Murat. In 1814 he became the most assiduous courtier of Marie Louise, and felt, or affected to feel, for her a passion which the ex-Empress of the French did not hesitate to receive favourably. He became an officer of her household, her Chamberlain, her advocate before the Congress of Vienna, her Prime Minister in the Duchy of Parma, and, after the death of Napoleon, her morganatic spouse. By her he had three children; two daughters, one of whom married the son of the Count San Vitale, Grand Chamberlain of Parma, and the other died prematurely, and a son who assumed

the name of Count de Montenuovo, and served in the Austrian army. Up to the time of his death, in 1829, the Count de Neipperg was destined to exercise a paramount influence over her, such as Napoleon never had.

After Waterloo every day weakened the remembrance of France in the mind of Marie Louise. The four years during which she had reigned there—two in all the brilliancy of a perpetual apotheosis, an Olympic vision and dazzling enchantment, two in the sinister gloom of misfortunes which culminated in overwhelming disaster—appeared to her as in the dim distance, the two former like a golden dream, the two latter like a nightmare. But the whole of this period was nothing more than a fleet episode in her life. She really deserved the nickname, the Austrian, which had been wrongfully bestowed on Marie Antoinette, for Marie Antoinette became absolutely French. More completely taken up with the Count de Neipperg than with the Duke de Reichstadt, the Duchess of Parma—such was the style and title of the woman who had won the double crown of France and Italy—spent more of her time in her Principality than in Vienna. While her son never left the Emperor Francis, she reigned in the petty Duchy which was secured to her for her life only, for the Coalition had been afraid of conferring the title of Hereditary Duke of Parma on the son of Napoleon. Nevertheless, Marie Louise was not what

one would call a bad mother. She was present at the death-bed of her son, who died of consumption and disappointment in his twenty-second year.

Thus was broken the last link which bound the widow of Napoleon to the imperial epoch. In 1833 she married for the third time. She married a Frenchman, but a Frenchman the son of an exile, who was in the Austrian service. He was a M. de Bombelles, the son of a young lady of Mackau, an intimate friend of Madame Elisabeth, and the wife of that Count de Bombelles, who after having been the Ambassador of Louis XVI. in Portugal, and subsequently in Vienna, took holy orders on the death of his wife, and became Bishop of Amiens under the Restoration. Marie Louise, who died on the 17th of December, 1847, at the age of fifty-six, always lived amid surroundings absolutely hostile to the glory of Napoleon. The ideas of her old age bore a strong resemblance to the ideas of her infancy, and in the closing days of her life she still anathematised the principles of the French Revolution and of that liberalism whose consequences she had experienced even in the Duchy of Parma. The judgment passed by Austria in regard to her is aptly epitomised in the following lines, the concluding stanza of a remarkable German work by M. de Helfert:—

Si son époux, par une paix durable.
Eût mis un terme à d'injustes succès,
Louise eût fait le bonheur des Français,
En partageant leur gloire incomparable.

As for France, it reproached her with having abandoned Napoleon, and perhaps still more severely for having given him, the most celebrated man of modern times, two obscure successors.

If Marie Louise attracts but little sympathy, by way of revenge there is no tale more melancholy or more touching than the life and death of her son. He is a type of hope deceived by reality, of youth and beauty cut off in their prime, of innocence paying for guilt, of an expiatory victim impressed with the seal of fatality. It might almost be said that he came into the world only to present an ever memorable example of the instability of so-called human greatness. When worn out by suffering, and on the point of death, he said sadly, "My birth and my death—that is all my history." After all, this short history is perhaps more fruitful of instruction than the longest reigns. The son of the Emperor will be famous for all time under his three names—King of Rome, Napoleon II., Duke de Reichstadt. He has already inspired the greatest poets, and has drawn profound reflections from philosophers and Christians. His memory is inseparable from that of his father, and posterity will never cease to be moved by his cradle and his grave. Even those who pursue the memory of Napoleon with insult and invective, feel their resentment cool when they think of his son, and when, in the Capucine Chapel at Vienna, a monk casts the lurid glare of his torch on the sombre

vault where the son of the giant of battles rests by the side of his grandfather, the Emperor Francis II., who was at once his protector and his gaoler, one cannot avoid a feeling of deep emotion, and one meditates sadly on the inanity of political calculations, and on the nothingness of glory, power, and genius.

Poor child! His birth had been welcomed with so many blessings, such sounding of trumpets, such transports of joy! Paris gave itself up to a perfect delirium of enthusiasm when, on the morning of the 20th of March, 1811, there resounded the twenty-second round of the salute, so anxiously awaited and announcing that the Emperor had a son, and not a daughter. Very resplendent was his cradle of mother-of-pearl and gold, surmounted by a Victory, with wings outstretched as if to protect the slumber of the King of Rome! He was so sweet and so pretty, that imperial babe, under the cool shade of Saint Cloud in his little chaise drawn by two sheep as white as snow! He was but a year old when the painter Gérard pourtrayed him seated in his cradle, and playing with a cup and ball, the stick of which he might have taken for a sceptre, and the ball for the world's globe, fitting toys of his infancy. On the eve of the battle of Moscow, Napoleon was giving his final orders for the colossal struggle of the following day. Suddenly a Prefect of the Palace, M. de Bausset, arrived unexpectedly,

having come straight from Paris with the masterpiece of Gérard. The preoccupation of the General disappeared at once before the joyful emotion of the father. "Gentlemen," said Napoleon to his officers, "if my son were fifteen, rest assured that he would be here, among all you brave men, in the flesh and not on canvas." He had the portrait of the King of Rome placed on a chair in front of his tent, so that the soldiers might see it, and that the spectacle might furnish them with a fresh incentive to victory. And then the old grenadiers of the Garde Impériale, those grizzled veterans—they who never abandoned their Emperor, who were to follow him to Elba, and lay down their lives at Waterloo—those heroic men, as good as they were brave, wept for joy as they gazed on the portrait of the child for whom they hoped that their deeds had assured a glorious future for ever.

Ah, that future, how sad it was to be! Less than two years afterwards Cossacks formed the escort of the King of Rome. A prisoner of the Coalition, he was snatched from his father for ever. Napoleon, on his return from Elba, entered the Palace of the Tuileries once more, as if by a miracle, on the 20th of March, 1815. His joy was still incomplete. The 20th of March was the birthday of the King of Rome. But the child was not there. His father never saw him again. In Vienna the little Prince seemed a prey to premature melancholy. He missed his young com-

panions. "I can plainly see," he said, "that I am no longer a king. I have no pages."

The King of Rome had lost the cheerfulness and childish loquacity which were so charming in him. So far from his becoming familiar with the personages who formed his new surrounding, he seemed to suspect them and to be on his guard with them. During the hundred days the private secretary of Marie Louise left her in Vienna in order to rejoin Napoleon in Paris. "Have you any message for your father?" he asked the little Prince. The child drew back, and, as though he were watched, he led the loyal adherent into the embrasure of a window and murmured beneath his breath, "You will tell him that I always love him dearly."

Across the thousands of leagues that separated them, the son consoled the father. In 1816 the captive of St. Helena received a lock of the Prince's hair, and a letter which his inexperienced hand, guided by others, had written. Napoleon was filled with joy. The captive forgot his fetters. He experienced the same access of happiness as on the eve of the battle of Moscow, when the portrait of his well-beloved son was brought to him. As he did then, so in St. Helena he summoned those around him, and with deep emotion showed them the lock of hair and the letter of his son.

The child, for his part, did not forget his father. In vain were a German name and title bestowed upon

him; in vain did they take away from him the Imperial coat of arms with the eagle; in vain did they deprive him even of his family name of Napoleon, that name which struck terror into the enemies of France. His Highness Prince Frances Charles Joseph, Duke de Reichstadt, was well aware that his real titles were King of Rome and Napoleon II. He knew that through his veins coursed the blood of the greatest warrior of modern times. He displayed military instincts almost as he left his cradle. He was five years old when he said to the artist Hummel who was painting his portrait: "I want to be a soldier; I will fight well; I will rush to the assault." "But, Monseigneur," replied the painter, "you will meet with bayonets to repel you, perhaps to kill you." And the child rejoined: "But shall I not have a sword to put them aside?" He was dressed in uniform before he was seven. He learnt his drill most zealously, and when by way of reward the grade of sergeant was conferred upon him, he was as proud of his stripes as if they had been a throne. The grandeur of his father was ever in his thoughts, and plunged his youthful imagination into a species of ecstasy.

In Paris the crowd no longer gave a thought to the son of the Emperor. In 1820 the great capital saluted the cradle of the Duke de Bordeaux just as it had saluted that of the King of Rome. A bond of near relationship united these two children, the representa-

tives of such different causes. Their mothers were doubly cousins-german, on the paternal as well as on the maternal side. The Duchess de Berry, mother of the Duke de Bordeaux, was the daughter of the King of Naples, Francis I., son of King Ferdinand IV., and Queen Marie Caroline, and her mother was the Princess Marie Clémentine, daughter of the Emperor Leopold II. The Emperor Francis, father of the Empress Marie Louise, was himself a son of Leopold II., and his wife was the Princess Marie Thérèse of Naples, daughter of Queen Marie Caroline, and aunt of the Duchess de Berry. The King of Rome and the Duke de Bordeaux were therefore second cousins twice over.

On the 22nd of July, 1821, at Schönbrunn, in the same room, in the same month, and on the same day of the month, that he was destined to breathe his last eleven years afterwards, the child who had been King of Rome was informed of the death of his father. The sad news plunged him into the profoundest sorrow. He was not allowed to be called Bonaparte or Napoleon, but they permitted him to weep. The Duke de Reichstadt and his household were authorised to wear mourning for the captive of St. Helena.

In common justice to the Emperor Francis it must be recorded that he displayed great affection towards his grandson. He had him constantly with him, in his bedroom and in his study, nor did he leave him in

him; in vain did they take away from him the Imperial coat of arms with the eagle; in vain did they deprive him even of his family name of Napoleon, that name which struck terror into the enemies of France. His Highness Prince Frances Charles Joseph, Duke de Reichstadt, was well aware that his real titles were King of Rome and Napoleon II. He knew that through his veins coursed the blood of the greatest warrior of modern times. He displayed military instincts almost as he left his cradle. He was five years old when he said to the artist Hummel who was painting his portrait: "I want to be a soldier; I will fight well; I will rush to the assault." "But, Monseigneur," replied the painter, "you will meet with bayonets to repel you, perhaps to kill you." And the child rejoined: "But shall I not have a sword to put them aside?" He was dressed in uniform before he was seven. He learnt his drill most zealously, and when by way of reward the grade of sergeant was conferred upon him, he was as proud of his stripes as if they had been a throne. The grandeur of his father was ever in his thoughts, and plunged his youthful imagination into a species of ecstasy.

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obstacles in the way of your ascending the throne of France," the Duke was full of ideas of ambition, patriotism, and greatness. He who had been conceived in glory thought himself called by Providence to a magnificent destiny. The horizon of his mental vision was brilliant and vast. His vivid imagination was, as it were, enveloped and devoured by a secret flame. In his youthful dreams he revived Poland, and reconstructed the immense Empire. He prepared to play his part by studying, with Marshal Marmont, the campaigns of the victor of Austerlitz. The lessons lasted three months, and on their conclusion the Duke gave his portrait to Napoleon's old comrade in arms, and underneath it wrote these four lines which, in the *Phèdre* of Racine, Hippolyte addresses to Thèremène :—

> Arrivé près de moi par un zèle sincère,
> Tu me contais alors l'histoire de mon père,
> Tu sais combien mon âme, attentive à ta voix,
> S'echauffait au récit de ses nobles exploits.

He was as passionately fond of poetry as he was of the noble profession of arms. One day his medical attendant, Dr. Malfatti, quoted two lines to him from the author of the *Méditations*:—

> Borné dans sa nature, infini dans ses vœux,
> L'homme est un Dieu tombé qui se souvient des cieux.

"That is a magnificent thought," said the young Prince; "to me it is as pleasing as it is striking. I am sorry I do not know the works of Lamartine."

ignorance either of the misfortunes or of the glories of Napoleon. "It is my wish," he said, to the Prince de Metternich, "that the Duke de Reichstadt should respect the memory of his father, that he should take example by his great qualities, and that he should learn to appreciate his faults in order to avoid them and arm himself against their fatal influence. Talk to the Prince about his father as you would wish people to speak of you to your own son. In this respect hide no truth from him, but teach him to honour the memory of his father." Military exercises, manœuvres, strategy, and the study of the history of the great captains, especially Napoleon, were the favourite occupations of the young Prince.

While the elder branch of the Bourbons ruled in France the Duke de Reichstadt never dreamed of regaining the crown and sceptre of his father. But the Revolution of 1830 suddenly revived all his hopes. When he knew that the tricolor had replaced the white flag; when he was informed of the enthusiasm which had once more seized upon the French in favour of the men and things of the Empire; when he heard the Austrian Ministers repeatedly state that Louis Philippe was a mere usurper whose reign could only be ephemeral; and when his grandfather, the Emperor Francis, that model of prudence and wisdom, said to him one day, "If the French nation ask you, and the allies give their consent, I will not throw any

tervals. If at certain moments he had faith in his star, at others he looked upon it as extinguished for ever in the darkness of night. Philosophic and ambitious by turn, he at times thought mournfully of the willow of St. Helena shading the solitary tomb of the great Napoleon, and he said to himself sadly that nothing here below is worth the wish of a wise man. At other times he was possessed by impetuous enthusiasm, an access of pride, and feverish impatience to throw himself into the midst of the strife, and seize with valiant hand the golden globe of Charlemagne or the sword of the modern Cæsar.

At such times he heard, as far-off echoes, the applause, the blast of trumpets, the sound of clarions, and the roll of the French drums. Yes, he would set out from Austria and enter France, that well-beloved country, once more. He would pass victorious under the Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile, and he would bow his head in respect before the Vendôme Column, before ascending with proud step the grand staircase of the Tuileries, to the railing of which, on the 29th of March, 1814, the day of his departure, he had clung with his childish hands, vainly attempting to postpone his hour of exile. After so much wretchedness he would be happy. Would the same acclamations which greeted his birth welcome his return? At the thought that he should be the avenger of his father, his eyes shone with lightning fire. Like an eaglet flapping its

having come straight from Paris with the masterpiece of Gérard. The preoccupation of the General disappeared at once before the joyful emotion of the father. "Gentlemen," said Napoleon to his officers, "if my son were fifteen, rest assured that he would be here, among all you brave men, in the flesh and not on canvas." He had the portrait of the King of Rome placed on a chair in front of his tent, so that the soldiers might see it, and that the spectacle might furnish them with a fresh incentive to victory. And then the old grenadiers of the Garde Impériale, those grizzled veterans—they who never abandoned their Emperor, who were to follow him to Elba, and lay down their lives at Waterloo—those heroic men, as good as they were brave, wept for joy as they gazed on the portrait of the child for whom they hoped that their deeds had assured a glorious future for ever.

Ah, that future, how sad it was to be! Less than two years afterwards Cossacks formed the escort of the King of Rome. A prisoner of the Coalition, he was snatched from his father for ever. Napoleon, on his return from Elba, entered the Palace of the Tuileries once more, as if by a miracle, on the 20th of March, 1815. His joy was still incomplete. The 20th of March was the birthday of the King of Rome. But the child was not there. His father never saw him again. In Vienna the little Prince seemed a prey to premature melancholy. He missed his young com-

panions. "I can plainly see," he said, "that I am no longer a king. I have no pages."

The King of Rome had lost the cheerfulness and childish loquacity which were so charming in him. So far from his becoming familiar with the personages who formed his new surrounding, he seemed to suspect them and to be on his guard with them. During the hundred days the private secretary of Marie Louise left her in Vienna in order to rejoin Napoleon in Paris. "Have you any message for your father?" he asked the little Prince. The child drew back, and, as though he were watched, he led the loyal adherent into the embrasure of a window and murmured beneath his breath, "You will tell him that I always love him dearly."

Across the thousands of leagues that separated them, the son consoled the father. In 1816 the captive of St. Helena received a lock of the Prince's hair, and a letter which his inexperienced hand, guided by others, had written. Napoleon was filled with joy. The captive forgot his fetters. He experienced the same access of happiness as on the eve of the battle of Moscow, when the portrait of his well-beloved son was brought to him. As he did then, so in St. Helena he summoned those around him, and with deep emotion showed them the lock of hair and the letter of his son.

The child, for his part, did not forget his father. In vain were a German name and title bestowed upon

"I will send you them, Monseigneur," replied the doctor. On the following day the Duke read them aloud, and tears of heroism bedewed his eyes, and emotion trembled in his voice, when he read these lines, which the poet seemed to address to him:—

> Courage, enfant déchu d'une race divine,
> Tu portes sur ton front la céleste origine,
> Tout homme, en te voyant, reconnait dans tes yeux,
> Un rayon éclipsé de la splendeur des cieux.

And who would not have recognised in him a really extraordinary being? In his countenance, his gestures, and his bearing, there was something imperial. In the drawing-room or in a barrack he seemed born to rule. He was admired and loved. He was born for conquests in love and in glory. He was in truth the son of Cæsar. If he appeared at any festivity his pale complexion, his quick but searching look, his martial elegance, his manner at once proud and modest, and his countenance, a harmonious mixture of energy and sweetness, made women dream of him. If he showed himself to soldiers he electrified them. One day, when mounted on a restive horse, the young and daring rider inspected his battalion, his majestic carriage made such an impression on the troops that, accustomed as they were to absolute silence when under arms, they broke out suddenly into loud cheers by way of expressing their admiration.

And yet the son of Napoleon, in spite of all the ardour of his soul, had gleams of hope only at in-

tervals. If at certain moments he had faith in his star, at others he looked upon it as extinguished for ever in the darkness of night. Philosophic and ambitious by turn, he at times thought mournfully of the willow of St. Helena shading the solitary tomb of the great Napoleon, and he said to himself sadly that nothing here below is worth the wish of a wise man. At other times he was possessed by impetuous enthusiasm, an access of pride, and feverish impatience to throw himself into the midst of the strife, and seize with valiant hand the golden globe of Charlemagne or the sword of the modern Cæsar.

At such times he heard, as far-off echoes, the applause, the blast of trumpets, the sound of clarions, and the roll of the French drums. Yes, he would set out from Austria and enter France, that well-beloved country, once more. He would pass victorious under the Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile, and he would bow his head in respect before the Vendôme Column, before ascending with proud step the grand staircase of the Tuileries, to the railing of which, on the 29th of March, 1814, the day of his departure, he had clung with his childish hands, vainly attempting to postpone his hour of exile. After so much wretchedness he would be happy. Would the same acclamations which greeted his birth welcome his return? At the thought that he should be the avenger of his father, his eyes shone with lightning fire. Like an eaglet flapping its

wings before taking wing to soar in the clouds, the heir of Napoleon looked the sun in the face.

Alas for the young Prince, the sun was soon to be obscured by eternal night. All this was but a dream, the vision of a moment.

The forecasts to which events in Poland and France had for an instant given rise vanished. The Court of Vienna recognised the Monarchy of July. One day when endeavours were being made to persuade the young Prince to be present at a ball to be given by Marshal Maison, the representative of France in Austria, he said, "What have I to do at the house of the Ambassador of Louis Philippe, whose Government has passed decrees of banishment and proscription against me? Not one of those present at the ball could see me there without blushing for me, and what would be my feelings all the time?" He became restless and taciturn, distrustful of men and things. "My friend," he said to his confidant, the Count de Prokesch-Osten, "answer me one question, which at this moment is of paramount importance to me. What do they think of me in the world? Do they recognise me in those caricatures which so many papers publish of me, and in which they amuse themselves by depicting me as a being whose intelligence has faded away?" M. de Prokesch replied, "Do not be uneasy. Do you not appear in public daily? Could even those people who are least conversant with facts see you and lend

credence to such fables, invented by impostors who care naught for the truth?" The young Duke remained, however, quite as sad, and every day diminished his faith in his destiny. On another occasion the Count de Prokesch-Osten found him meditating on his father's will. "The fourth paragraph of the first clause," he said, "contains the rule of conduct of my whole life. In this passage my father recommends me never to forget that I was born a French Prince." Assuredly, he never did forget it, and if he was so excitable, if he suffered to such an extent, and if disappointment hurried him with such frightful rapidity to the grave, it was because he felt himself condemned by inevitable destiny to live and die an Austrian Prince.

He sought, after violent emotion and excessive fatigue, to withdraw himself from his thoughts, which pursued him like spectres, persecuted him, and were killing him. In vain did the doctors recommend calm and self-restraint. Attacked by a disease of the chest —one of those merciless diseases—he needed absolute repose, but repose was punishment to him. He preferred death—death which would set him free. Dr. Malfatti, who took the most lively interest in him, and who trembled at his many imprudences, begged him not to give up, as to pleasure, a life which might possibly be so full of interest and so beautiful. "Monseigneur," he said, "it is a great pity that your Highness has not the faculty of changing your body, as

you change your horses when they are tired. I beg of you, Monseigneur, to recognise that you have a soul of iron in a body of glass, and that the abuse of volition cannot fail to be disastrous to you."

The young invalid shut his ears. He scarcely slept, scarcely ate. He foolishly braved the inclemency of the seasons. He rode restive horses. He took interminable walks. His chest and throat were exhausted. What did it matter? He would insist upon always commanding on parade. His voice grew hoarse. Soon he could not even speak. His malady did not cause him pain, it irritated him. His energetic nature could not grow accustomed to the idea of renouncing the struggle. He fought against suffering as he fought against destiny. "Oh!" he said, "how I hate this miserable body, which cannot follow the will of my mind!" Dr. Malfatti said about him: "There seems to be in this unhappy young man an active principle which impels him to a species of suicide; all reasoning and every precaution fail against this fatality which drags him onward."

The end was at hand. The sacrifice was on the point of being consummated. The victim would not ask God to take the bitter cup from his lips. The dying man would not fight against his inexorable malady. He resigned himself, he submitted. He became docile as a child, quiet as a lamb. The earth abandoned him. He turned his eyes to Heaven. "I

have come," said he to M. de Prokesch-Osten, "to understand and feel the sublimity of religion, which alone can enlighten the onward path of man amid the uncertainty and gloom that surround him. Religion is our pilgrim's staff. We can lean on it as on a very firm support during our progress through the night of this terrestrial life." He received from the Emperor and Empress of Austria a book of prayers, entitled *Saintes Harmonies*, which he read and re-read incessantly on the couch where he underwent such severe suffering. The pious book had as a dedication these touching lines in the handwriting of his grandfather: "In every event of your life, in every inward struggle of your soul, may God help you with his light and strength. Such is the earnest wish of your grandparents who love you."

"This book is very precious to me," said the Prince to his friend, at the conclusion of a serious conversation on religious topics, "these words written by my relatives, whom I respect and love, are of inestimable value to me, but, nevertheless, I give them to you. Let my most precious treasure remain in your hands as a souvenir of this one of our conversations which in my eyes is the most important."

When the young man was dying he gazed on the crucifix to prevent himself from complaining of his lot. To die thus, to fall on the very threshold of a career which appeared to be on the eve of being so brilliant

and so glorious! To descend so quickly into the gloomy vault of the Hapsburgs! The shades of death instead of his dazzling dreams! In place of the throne of France an Austrian tomb! The unhappy Prince resigned himself, but from some sense of bashfulness he wished the witnesses of his last sufferings to be as few as possible. It cost him much to display to the world the son of Napoleon so weakly and so overcome. Only with difficulty could he raise from his burning couch his weak and lean hand, that hand which should have wielded the sword and sceptre of Charlemagne. "I am so weak," he said. "Do not, I beg of you, let any one see me in my misery!" He presented his magnificent silver-gilt cradle to the Imperial Treasury of Vienna, which was situated close to the Church of the Capucine, where he was going to be buried. "My cradle and my tomb will be very close to each other," he said. "My birth and my death—there you have all my history." One of the eagles which surmounted the Castle of Schönbrunn was overthrown during a thunderstorm, and the people saw in that a presage foretelling that the son of Napoleon would die in that Palace. And, indeed, he did breathe his last there in the room which his father occupied in 1809, when, for the first time, perhaps, the conqueror of Wagram dreamt of that Austrian marriage which—so the hero thought—was destined to secure to the Napoleonic dynasty un-

limited power and glory. The Prince had only one wish—to see his mother. She came, and he received her tenderly. He had also by his side his young and lovely relative, the Archduchess Sophie, mother of the reigning Sovereign of Austria, who was then pregnant. This poetic and charming Princess, who loved the dying youth and soothed his agony, told him that the hour had come for him to receive the last sacraments. "We will pray together," she said to him, "I for you, and you for me and the child I bear in my womb." The Prince, consoled and fortified by the consolations of religion, ended his brief career with feelings of lively faith and sincere piety. "My mother! My mother!" were his last words. General Hartmann has left on record this testimony: "Having spent my life on the field of battle, I have had constantly before my eyes the spectacle of death; I never saw a soldier die with greater courage." The date, the 22nd of July, possessed peculiar importance in the destiny of the Prince. On the 22nd of July, 1818, the name of Duke de Reichstadt was substituted for his own of Napoleon and Bonaparte. On the 22nd of July, 1821, he was informed of the death of his father. On the 22nd of July, 1832, at the age of twenty-one years, four months, and two days, he rendered up to God his youthful spirit.

M. Cuvillier-Fleury, who was private secretary to King Louis Bonaparte, and tutor to the Duke d'Aumale,

wrote, in July, 1879, this beautiful passage in the *Journal des Débats*: "There is no longer any room for songs of triumph in the land of France when we speak of the dynasties which have in turn reigned over her, and the present misfortunes of some furnish no consolation to the others for the afflictions which blind fortune caused them in days gone by. In spite of all the poet says, grand ruins do not console each other. At most the imagination, when it deals with immortality, may represent these heirs of sovereign races meeting in another world, and may possibly see the oldest member of a family of brilliant princes, killed thirty-six years ago (the 13th of July, 1842) on the pavement of a street, receiving the last of the Napoleons, assassinated by savages, and giving him the martial welcome which is due to unfortunate courage." M. Cuvillier-Fleury might have at the same time alluded to the King of Rome, whose cousin the young and brilliant heir of Louis Philippe was. The King of the French, the father of the Orleans Princes, and the Emperor Francis II., the father of the Empress Marie Louise, had married two sisters, Marie Thérèse, of Naples, and Marie Amélie, both daughters of Queen Marie Caroline, the sister of Marie Antoinette. Another curious fact is that there existed a close bond of relationship—relationship in the sixth degree—between the Duke de Reichstadt, chief of the Imperial dynasty, the Count de Chambord, chief of the elder branch of the Bourbons, and the Count de

Paris, chief of the younger branch—all three descendants in a direct line of the great Empress Marie Thérèse, and her daughter, Marie Caroline, Queen of Naples. How many vicissitudes and catastrophes were there in the destinies of these three second-cousins, and what hopes and disappointments do not these names invoke! What philosophic reflections present themselves to the mind when we think of these three cradles! How completely should misfortune, which strikes all dynasties with like impartiality, calm all bitterness, appease all anger, and extinguish all political hatred! Why long for greatness which is of so little account, for thrones which totter so, and glories which pass away so quickly! Is not the history of each reign but a funeral oration, and might it not be said that Providence takes a cruel pleasure in making sport alike of all Emperors and Kings? We intend to sketch five studies on the second wife and son of Napoleon I. The first will be entitled, "The Halcyon Days of Marie Louise;" the second, "Marie Louise and the Fall of the Empire;" the third, "Marie Louise and the Invasion of 1814;" the fourth, "Marie Louise, the Island of Elba, and the Hundred Days;" the fifth, "Marie Louise and the Duke de Reichstadt." The first—the one we are now about to commence—deals with a period of brilliancy, infatuation, and magnificent splendour, whose dazzling brightness will furnish a contrast to the horrible gloom which succeeded it. With the assist-

ance of eye-witnesses, in whose memoirs the precious souvenirs are contained—such as the Prince de Metternich, the principal negotiator of the marriage of the Archduchess; M. de Bausset and General de Ségur, both attached to the household of the Emperor Napoleon, and seeing him every day; Madame Durand, first lady-in-waiting of the Empress; and the Baron de Méneval, her private secretary—we will endeavour to revive that brilliant past, taking for our motto the saying of Michelet, "History is a resurrection." An excellent German work, well worthy of translation, "Marie Louise, Empress of the French," by M. de Helfert, gives us a detailed account of the early years of the mother of the King of Rome. Finally, we have discovered among the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, thanks to the intelligent and liberal direction which so greatly facilitates the task of historical research, a large number of very curious and unpublished documents; for example, the letters addressed by the Emperor and Empress of Austria to Napoleon, as well as the despatches of Count Otto, his Ambassador at Vienna. This first study will end at the opening of the campaign against Russia, that epoch of greatest triumph, when unheard-of prosperity seemed destined to be everlasting. Never was a more awful night preceded by a more brilliant day. Napoleon said, on the rock of St. Helena, "The reign of Marie Louise was very short; but she must have enjoyed it, for she had the world at her feet."

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY YEARS.

The Archduchess of Austria, Marie Louise, Empress of the French and Queen of Italy, afterwards Duchess of Parma, Plaisance, and Guastalla, was born in Vienna on the 12th of December, 1791, of the Archduke Francis, Prince Imperial, and Emperor of Germany in the following year under the name of Francis II., and a Princess of Naples, Marie Thérèse, daughter of King Ferdinand IV. and Queen Marie Caroline.

The father of Marie Louise was born on the 12th of February, 1768—a year and a half before the Emperor Napoleon. Grandson of the great Empress Marie Thérèse, his father was the Emperor Leopold II.,

brother of Queen Marie Antoinette of France, whom he succeeded on the 1st of March, 1792, and his mother was a Spanish Princess, daughter of Charles III., King of Spain. He was married four times. He was an excellent husband, but the paternal instinct was so strongly developed in him that he could not endure widowhood. In 1788 he married his first wife, the Princess Elisabeth Wilhelmine Louise de Wurtemberg, who died prematurely in child-bed on the 17th of February, 1790, leaving a little daughter, who also died when six months old. In the same year he married, at Naples, by procuration, on the 15th of August, and personally at Vienna on the 19th of September, the young Neapolitan Princess Marie Thérèse, daughter of Ferdinand IV. and Marie Caroline, who reigned over the Two Sicilies.

The young Princess, who was born on the 6th of June, 1772, was then eighteen years of age. She was sweet, virtuous, and well brought up. She always gave the best possible example to the Court of Vienna. Her mother, who, during a reign of thirty-six years, passed through so many experiences and displayed such noble qualities, as well as grave faults, was an extraordinary woman.

Marie Caroline, Queen of Naples, energetic to the verge of exaggeration, courageous to heroism, believing that severity, and sometimes even cruelty, is obligatory upon Sovereigns, religious to superstition, autocratic to

despotism, an enthusiast for pleasure and duty in turn, impetuous in her affection and her resentment, in her joys and in her sorrows, had her faults as a Sovereign, but as a mother was beyond reproach. Like the matrons of ancient days, and her own illustrious mother, the great Empress Marie Thérèse, she took a pride in fecundity. She had no less than seventeen children, and the anxieties of politics never prevented her from giving these beloved beings both moral and material care as active as it was intelligent. If she was not fortunate enough to see them all grow up to maturity, those whom she succeeded in retaining were the constant objects of her tender solicitude. She paid great attention to the education of her two sons, the Duke de Calabre and the Prince de Salerne, and more still to her five daughters, Marie Thérèse, wife of the Emperor Francis II.; Marie Louise, who married the Archduke Ferdinand, Grand Duke of Tuscany; Marie Christine, wife of Charles Felix, Duke de Génevois, afterwards King of Sardinia; Marie Amelie, Duchess d'Orleans, subsequently Queen of the French; and Marie Antoinette, the first wife of the Prince of Asturias, who was afterwards King Ferdinand VII. of Spain.

Marie Caroline was very fond of her eldest daughter, Marie Thérèse, and when, in 1790, that Princess married the Archduke Francis, two years afterwards Emperor of Germany, a very tender and very constant

correspondence in French ensued between mother and daughter. The subjects of pregnancy and childbirth were constantly dealt with, for Marie Caroline and Marie Thérèse were both pregnant at the same time. When the daughter was delivered of her first child—the future Empress of the French—the Queen sent her the warmest congratulations. "I congratulate you," she wrote, "on your courage; complaining and groaning lead to nothing, and do not diminish pain. That is an evil to which you must submit for the sake of the happiness of being a mother. I am sure that whenever you look at your child which, so I am told, is large, healthy, and well-made, you forget all your sufferings." The young mother was barely delivered of her child than her mother, indefatigable in the performance of her vows to have, both in her own case and those of her daughters, a very numerous posterity, exhorted her to furnish the little Archduchess Marie Louise with a brother as soon as possible. On the 17th of April, 1793, an Archduke, Ferdinand, the future Emperor of Germany, was born, and his grandmother, Queen Marie Caroline, wrote:—"I have wept for joy! God be praised for this happy deliverance, for the birth of your dear boy!" In regard to fecundity, the wife of the Emperor Francis II., followed the example of her mother. Her eldest daughter, the Archduchess Marie Louise, received at her side a most careful education. The little Princess, whose dispo-

sition was agreeable and docile, learned her lessons attentively, and had a very sound knowledge of French, English, Italian, drawing, and music. In her a two-fold feeling was engendered, respect for the ideas of religion and a horror of Revolutionary ideas.

Her grandmother, Queen Marie Caroline, who in 1800 arrived at the Court of Vienna on a visit, and remained there two years, had conversations with the young Marie Louise which assuredly were not calculated to inspire in her any predilection in favour of the French Revolution and General Bonaparte. One can easily understand to what a pitch of suffering and indignation the warm-hearted and haughty Queen of the Two Sicilies had been wrought by reason of the tortures and sacrifice of her sister Marie Antoinette. There was something solemn in the manner in which she apprised her children of what had happened in Paris on the 16th of October, 1793. She summoned them all around her and, dressed in deep mourning, and with her eyes bathed in tears, she led them in silence to the chapel of the royal palace in Naples, and there, before the altar, she told them that a regicide nation had sacrificed their aunt on the scaffold. Then she told them to pray all together for the repose of the soul of the victim, and I am not sure that at that time thoughts of anger and vengeance did not mingle with her prayers in the exasperated heart of Marie Caroline. From that moment she instituted against the principles

and propaganda of the Revolution a fierce, implacable warfare, marked by alternations of success and defeat which made her hold the New France in more and more bitter detestation. The departure of the expedition of Bonaparte to Egypt was deemed by her a fitting moment to give the signal for a general rising throughout Italy against the French. But Championnet had seized on Naples, where the Parthenopean Republic was proclaimed, and the Queen with her family was compelled to take refuge in Palermo.

In the following year, 1799, a change took place in the aspect of affairs, and while Milan fell again into the power of Austria, and the Russian army, commanded by Suwarow, succeeded in driving the French out of Northern Italy, in the South the Parthenopean Republic died a natural death, and the Bourbon flag once more floated over the walls of Naples.

In the beginning of the year 1800 the French cause seemed lost for ever in Italy. General Masséna alone held his own at Genoa. Queen Marie Caroline was triumphant. She then took it into her head to betake herself to Austria to see her daughter, the Empress, once more, to make the acquaintance of her grandchildren, whom she had never seen, and also to lay claim to an increase of territory, merited, in her belief, by the sacrifices which the kingdom of the Two Sicilies had made in the common cause of the King and the Pope. She embarked on the 9th of June, 1800, at

Palermo, with her second son, the Prince de Salerne, and her three unmarried daughters, Marie Christine, Marie Amélie, and Marie Antoinette.

The ideas, sentiments, principles, prejudices, hatreds, hopes, and interests of Queen Marie Caroline, were precisely the same as those of her son-in-law the Emperor, of her daughter the Empress, and of her other daughter, the Grand Duchess of Tuscany. So far as politics were concerned, she found the same hatred and passions in Vienna as in her own Court at Naples. On her journey she experienced great joy and profound sorrow—the news of the capitulation of the French at Genoa, which roused her to enthusiasm, and the news of the defeat of the Austrians at Marengo, which affected her so deeply that she lost consciousness, and very nearly succumbed to an attack of apoplexy. We may easily conceive the influence which a woman of this disposition would exercise over the mind of her daughter, the Empress of Germany, and of her grand-daughter, the future Empress of the French. Most assuredly the young Marie Louise would have been considerably astonished if anybody had then predicted to her that she would one day marry this Bonaparte who was depicted by everybody as a monster. Marie Caroline did not leave Schönbrunn on her return to her States until the 29th of July, 1802. For two years she had laboured, unremittingly, and not without success, to increase, if such a thing were possible, the execration

which France and French ideas inspired in the Court, the aristocracy, and the entire Austrian nation.

When in her childhood Marie Louise played with her little brothers and sisters, soldiers were their favourite toys. The ugliest, blackest, and most repulsive of them was christened Bonaparte, who was stuck all over with pins and had maledictions heaped on his wooden head.

The war of 1805, which brought Austria to the verge of ruin, added still more to the instinctive repulsion of the young Archduchess in regard to Napoleon. In Vienna the general alarm was at its height. The Imperial family were compelled to fly and disperse. Marie Louise was then only fourteen years of age, and she was already serving a rude apprenticeship in the school of misfortune. A fugitive in Hungary, and subsequently in Galicia, she ardently prayed to Heaven for the success of the Austrian arms. She wrote: "The advantage will end by being on the side of papa, and in the long run the moment will come when the usurper will be discouraged. God has perhaps permitted him to go so far in order that when He abandons him, he will be lost entirely." On the 21st of November, 1805, a few days before the battle of Austerlitz, she wrote Count Colloredo, the husband of her governess, a letter in which she said, "God must be very angry with us, because He punishes us so severely. At this moment one of those

generals who are as treacherous as cats is very probably residing in the rooms in which we lived at Schönbrunn. Our family is broken into pieces; my dear parents at Olmutz, ourselves at Kaschan, and a third column at Ofen."

Every kind of misfortune simultaneously struck this sorely-tried family. While the Emperor Francis was losing the battle of Austerlitz, his wife, who was in Silesia with only one of her children, the little Archduchess Léopoldine, born in 1797, and consequently only eight years of age, had a severe attack of measles and feared lest the contagion should spread to her daughter. "The only thing which would make me look upon death as cruel," she wrote to her husband, "would be to die without seeing you again. Do not take any step which would be hurtful to you or the State. Only do not let me be taken to France." Nothing troubled her so much as the dread of falling into the hands of the enemy. The details which her husband sent her of the interview he had had with Napoleon in camp did not reassure her. "I have been," he writes to her, "as happy as I could hope to be with a victor who has in his possession a large portion of my kingdom. So far as I and mine are concerned he has behaved very well. One can see that he is not a Frenchman." The Emperor Francis, therefore, attributed to the Italian origin of Napoleon the politeness displayed by the victor of Austerlitz.

Does not this simple reflection show the measure of esteem which the German Sovereign then entertained for France and the French character?

The Imperial family were once more reunited in Vienna, after so many sad vicissitudes, at the beginning of 1806. But a fresh misfortune was to befall them in the following year. The Empress, whose health had given way in consequence of her numerous confinements, gave premature birth, on the 9th of April, 1807, to a little daughter who did not survive. She herself had an attack of pleurisy, which was complicated by her confinement, and died four days afterwards in a spirit of the most devoted piety, after having bestowed her maternal blessing on her daughter Marie Louise and her other children. She had not attained her thirty-fifth year. The premature death of this amiable and virtuous Princess, whose cheerfulness and good nature were the animation and joy of the Court, plunged all her family in most profound grief.

The Emperor Francis was an excellent husband, but by way of contrast he was not an inconsolable widower. On the 13th of April, 1807, he lost his second wife, Marie Thérèse, and less than nine months afterwards, on the 6th of January, 1808, he married his young cousin, Marie Louise Beatrix d'Este, daughter of the deceased Archduke Ferdinand of Modena. This Princess, who was born on the 14th of December,

1787, was very little, but very agreeable both physically and morally. She was sprightly and gifted with tact and wit, but she was assuredly not calculated to inculcate in Marie Louise any taste for France and the French, seeing that if there was in Europe any Princess who from the bottom of her soul cordially detested the French Revolution and everything connected with it far and wide, the third wife of the Emperor Francis II. was that woman.

The new Empress was only four years older than her step-daughter Marie Louise. Only twenty-one years of age, she looked more like the sister than the step-mother of the young Archduchess, who was in her seventeenth year. The Empress, nevertheless, assumed the direction of the education of the Princess, and watched over her with as much solicitude as if she had been her own daughter.

CHAPTER II.

1809.

The Emperor Francis did not spend the honeymoon with his third wife, the young Empress Marie Louise Beatrix, entirely free from anxiety. It was evident to the whole world that the peace of Presbourg, like that of Lunéville, could only be a truce. Austria had never been able to console herself for having lost, from 1792 to 1806, the low countries, Suabia, Milan, the Venetian States, the Tyrol, Dalmatia, and lastly, the Imperial Crown of Germany, for the heir of the German Cæsars could only call himself Emperor of Austria, and a large portion of Germany had become the humble vassal of Napoleon. The one man of all the Austrians who felt the least amount of hatred against France, was, perhaps, the Emperor. All his family and all his people—nobles and priests, the middle classes and the peasantry—evinced a feeling

full of anger against the nation which had upset Europe. The new Empress, whose family had been dispossessed of the Duchy of Modena, made herself remarkable by the depth of her hatred and political passions. In the eyes of all Austrians, large and small, rich and poor, the Frenchman was their hereditary foe, the invader, the destroyer of the throne and the altar, impious, sacrilegious, revolutionary, and the author of every ill. He it was who for so many years had ravaged the harvest fields, shed torrents of blood, struck either with the guillotine knife or with the sword, accumulated war upon war and ruin upon ruin, at once the misfortune and the disgrace of humanity. The old nobility, formerly so proud of its armorial bearings and its sovereign rights, but now subdued, humiliated, and mediatised, had no curses bitter enough to hurl against the "fierce Corsican" who had struck at the very root of the old German tree, once so majestic. The priests anathematised the nation which had not shrunk from confiscating the patrimony of St. Peter, and cursed in Napoleon the persecutor of the pious Vicar of Jesus Christ. The women who had lost their husbands or their sons in the wars, one and all cast upon France the responsibility of their mourning and their tears. By reason of the French, the disturbers and spoilers, the enemies of the human race, despisers of morality and religion alike, Princes were suffering in their palaces, workmen in their

shops, business men in their offices, priests in their churches, soldiers in their camps, peasants in their huts. The movement of exasperation was irresistible. Every one said that it was a mistake to have laid down their arms; that they ought against France to have fought on to the bitter end, and to have sacrificed the last man and the last florin; that they had been wrong in not having gone to the assistance of Prussia after the Jéna Campaign; and that the moment had arrived for all the Powers to coalesce against the common enemy and crush him. Did he take any pains to conceal his desire to destroy every throne in order that he himself might become the oldest of sovereigns? Had he not had the audacity, at Milan, in 1805, to address these insolent words to the Prince de Cardito, the Envoy Extraordinary of Naples: "Tell your Queen that I will only leave her and her house enough ground for their tombs"? Had he not more recently still made use of this extraordinary language to the Spaniards under the walls of Madrid: "If you will not have my brother Joseph for your King, I do not intend to thrust him upon you. I have another throne to give him, and as for you, I shall treat you as a conquered country"? This other throne, so they said at the Court of Vienna, this throne which Napoleon did not designate—what could it be but the throne of the Emperor Francis II. himself? He had already had the Imperial crown of Germany taken away from him, and

now he was to be deprived of the crown of Austria. But, added the Archdukes and all the officers, that will not be such an easy task as these audacious French think, and they will end by being taught an exemplary lesson. The Haps burgs were not as amiable as the Bourbons of Spain. The Bayonne trap would not repeat itself. All Europe had arrived at a paroxysm of indignation. What was she waiting for before rising? A signal. That signal Austria was about to give. And this time with what chances of success! The motto was to be "victory or death." But they were sure of victory. The French army, scattered from the Oder to the Tagus, from the mountains of Bohemia to the Sierra Morena, would not be able to resist the onslaught of so many nations eager to break their bonds. Had not Russia and Prussia, as well as Austria, a revenge to take? Was not all Germany trembling with rage? Napoleon boasted of being the protector of the confederation of the Rhine. But if the confederate Princes were at his orders and in his pay, were not the people, more patriotic and more German than their chiefs, burning with the desire to drive out the French? Let but Napoleon experience one single check, and on which of his vassals could he rely? Would he even then be able to trust his own subjects? Were there not already innumerable germs of decay and dissolution in his over-grown Empire? Vienna, in 1809, indulged in the same language, and

felt the same passions that Berlin did in 1806. Military ardour had reached such a pitch that the greatest soldier of the Austrian monarchy, the illustrious Archduke Charles, was thought to be too calm and too moderate, and those spirits who were eager to begin the fray gave this brave warrior, this famous captain, the nick-name of the Prince of Peace. As for the Emperor Francis, even had he so wished, he would have been powerless to calm the bellicose fever of his army and his people.

Their muskets and ordnance would have gone off by themselves in default of a declaration of war. The Landwehr, then only organized a few months, were impatiently awaiting the hour when they should measure themselves against the veterans of the French army. Volunteers flocked in crowds to the colours. Patriotic subscriptions flowed in. A tale was told of a shoemaker who was in such despair at having been pronounced unfit for military service that he blew his brains out. Boys wanted to leave school to fight. All classes of society vied with each other in zeal, courage, and a spirit of sacrifice. When the news was made public that the Archduke Charles had, on the 20th of February, 1809, been appointed Generalissimo, there was an outburst of joy and confidence from one end of the Empire to the other. On the 9th of March the Archbishop of Vienna solemnly blessed the colours of the Landwehr in the Cathedral. The young Arch-

duchess Marie Louise was present, with all the members of the Imperial family, at this religious and patriotic ceremony. Could she have ever dreamt that one year later she would, to the great joy of the immense majority of that same Viennese population, become the wife of the Napoleon who was then the object of such violent wrath and such bitter hatred?

Never was there a more terrible war; never perhaps have been seen such human hecatombs. On the 8th of April, 1809, the Emperor Francis left his capital, and in it his children and his wife, who were only able to remain there until the 5th of May. From Vienna the Archduchess Marie Louise wrote a number of letters to her father. A rumour was current that the battle of Ecnühl had resulted in a brilliant victory for the Austrians. Marie Louise wrote on the 25th of April to the Emperor Francis: "We have heard with great joy that Napoleon was present at the great battle which he has lost. If he would only lose his head as well! A number of prophecies are current here about his approaching end, and they say that it is he who is referred to in the Apocalypse. They state that he is bound to die this year at Cologne, in an inn called the 'Écrevisse Rouge.' I do not attach much importance to all these predictions, but how happy I should be to see them realised!" Such sentiments, it will be admitted, were a somewhat curious preparation for the marriage of the following year.

When the Empress of Austria, accompanied by her children, was compelled to leave the town of Vienna, which was menaced by the approach of the enemy, she resembled a proscript rather than a Sovereign. At that time in a very weak state of health, she could scarcely endure the jolting of the carriage, and gave utterance to groans, drawn forth by mental as well as by physical suffering. "It is horrible," said Marie Louise, "to see her suffer in this way." The rain fell in torrents. The thunder pealed forth like a presage of all the calamities which were about to burst upon the country. The roads, damaged by the wet weather, were detestable, and when, after a long and tedious journey, the fugitives arrived at Buda, they were wet through to the skin and half dead with fatigue.

The illusions indulged in by the unhappy Imperial family had speedily given way to a recognition of the cruel reality. Vienna capitulated on the 12th of May, after having suffered dreadfully. Within a few hours eighteen hundred shells had been hurled against the city. The streets were narrow and the houses high. The population, huddled together in the fortified *enceinte*, where space was lacking, uttered shouts of terror and anger as they saw the damage done by the shells, and the fires which were breaking out on all sides. Who could have predicted that the Viennese, who were then heaping invectives upon Napoleon, the author of their ills, would ten months afterwards be

singing the praises of that detested Emperor, and would hang out French flags from the windows of their houses in token of friendship? On the 13th of May, 1809, the French, under General Oudinot, entered Vienna amid the curses and maledictions of a population mad with grief, and ten months afterwards, day for day, on the 13th of March, 1810, to the pealing of bells and salvoes of artillery, this time joyful and pacific, the same people were seen blessing and cheering an Archduchess on her leaving Vienna to share the bed of this very Napoleon!

But before that came to pass, what catastrophes had happened, how much blood had been shed! Never had there been a more formidable artillery duel. Never, on one side and the other, had there been greater animosity or warlike fury. It was a veritable battle of giants, in which all the infernal forces seemed to be simultaneously let loose! Napoleon himself, accustomed as he was to the horrors of carnage, was astonished at such a struggle. Never, perhaps, had he hurled such an audacious defiance against fortune. Despising the ordinary rules of military art, he had fought incessantly for twenty-four hours on a line three leagues in length, with one of the largest rivers in Europe at his back. Wagram was a victory, but a victory very dearly won. When at the commencement of the campaign there was a prevalent idea that events were about to take a turn favourable to Austria, there

had been a movement of joy, a quiver of hope, among nearly all the European nations, which showed the victor what would have happened had he been vanquished. He then showed a desire for peace as keen as his former desire for war. He no longer thought of making Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia three separate kingdoms; nor of dethroning the Emperor Francis for the purpose of replacing him by his brother, the Grand Duke of Wurzburg, formerly Grand Duke of Tuscany. The Austrians, for whom he had hitherto evinced a certain amount of contempt, now inspired him with the profoundest esteem. He admired their bravery, and still more the fidelity to their unhappy Sovereign of which they had given so many touching proofs. The victor of Wagram said to himself that if he had lost the battle instead of winning it, he certainly would not have entered the Tuileries as easily as the Emperor Francis had entered his Palace in Vienna. An Emperor of Austria could be defeated and still remain popular. That was an impossibility for him, the great Napoleon. It was precisely the reflection made by his successor when he fell a prisoner into the hands of Prussia—"In France one must not be unfortunate."

From the moment when he entered into negotiations for peace with Prince Jean de Leichtenstein and General de Berbera, Napoleon showed these two distinguished soldiers particular attention and regard.

Leaving no stone unturned to testify his personal esteem for them and to flatter their national pride, he praised the Austrian army in the warmest terms, and lauded the heroism displayed by it in the recent campaign. "You will always remain," he said to them, "the first Continental power after France; you are infernally strong. Allied as I was to Russia, I never thought I should have to carry on a serious Continental war, and what a war!" And then, by way of consoling them for the hard conditions imposed on mutilated Austria, he added, "Why lament the loss of a few strips of territory which may possibly one day come back to you? All this may last as long as I live. France cannot make war beyond the Rhine. I could, but with me all will be over." Possibly the victor already had an idea of marrying the Archduchess Marie Louise. In any case he paid Prince Jean de Leichtenstein and General Berbera such marked attention that all his staff noticed it. M. de Bausset, who was then in attendance as Prefect of the Palace, says in his Memoirs:—"When they breakfasted with the Emperor, I paid particular attention to the bearing of the two Austrian envoys. I scanned their faces, and I thought I saw a daily increase in the signs of harmony and good understanding. The politeness and gracious bearing of Napoleon towards these two gentlemen never relaxed for a moment. He seemed jealous of giving them a favourable im-

pression of his manner and himself." There were, nevertheless, in the Hapsburg Kingdom plenty of patriots, men and women who were inconsolable. The Princess Charles of Schwarzenberg—wife of the brilliant General who had just fought so heroically, and who in the following year conducted, as Ambassador of Austria at the Court of the Tuileries, the negotiations for the marriage of Napoleon and Marie Louise—the Princess Charles of Schwarzenberg wrote a despairing letter to her husband, in which she said: "I shall shut myself up in the far-distant past, so as to break off all relations with the present and the future. They tell me that the negotiations for this so-called peace are to be entrusted to you. There has been something supernatural in the way you have escaped with your name unsullied. I have but one wish on this earth—it is that this annihilation, which, through cowardice, we call peace, may become complete annihilation. No more political existence. I wish to be allowed the repose of the dead."

Napoleon was on the point of leaving Schönbrunn on his return to France when, on the 12th of October, 1809, just as he was to hold a review, he saw approaching him a young German whose suspicious appearance aroused his attention, and who was at once arrested. Underneath the coat of this youth, whose name was Staaps, and who was the son of a Protestant clergyman of Erfürt, was found a large, sharp knife, and the

owner of it unhesitatingly declared that his intention had been to kill the Emperor and deliver Germany. The cool, calm replies of this resolute fanatic, whom Napoleon himself examined, made a deep impression on the mind of the conqueror. Was not the German youth the precursor of those countless volunteers who were on the eve of organising in France a struggle which they considered a holy war? Face to face with this young man, Napoleon—who dared not pardon him, albeit he had not even attempted to put his crime into execution—experienced a painful feeling, a feeling in which pity mingled with surprise. He who had caused so many tears and so much blood to flow in Germany, was quite astonished to find that Germans did not love him. There is nothing so inopportune to the great ones of the world, and conquerors especially, as the thought of death—death, the sole enemy who is invincible. What! This chance passer-by, an ignorant fellow, a fool, a vulgar fanatic, to be able with a kitchen knife to put an end to the mightiest of heroes, the most illustrious of warriors, the most powerful of sovereigns! At Ratisbon, where he was wounded for the first time in his military career, the victor in so many fights discovered, not without vexation, that he was not invulnerable. At Erling, in presence of the corpse of the intrepid Marshal Lannes, both of whose legs had just been carried away by a cannon ball, he wrote very sadly to the Empress Josephine, the companion of his

happy days, "So ends everything!" And now he had been in danger of death at the hands of a poor, obscure student! As the Duchess d'Abrantés said, "This death which hovered round the Emperor in various forms, without, however, daring to touch him, but whose attempts seemed to say to him, take care of yourself!—all this was a presage, a direful presage." Napoleon then reflected seriously. To audacity and a love of adventure suddenly succeeded prudence and the desire of self-preservation. The all-powerful Emperor said to himself in the midst of his triumph that if he died without a direct heir, his gigantic Empire would certainly be dismembered, like that of Alexander the Great, and that this incomparable structure, built up with such labour and at such sacrifice, would crumble to the dust.

The national historian has said of him: "In proportion as public opinion deserted him, Napoleon consoled himself with the idea that it was the fault of the future, and not his fault, that his throne was menaced by premature decay. The thought of consolidating what he felt was trembling beneath his feet was his ruling preoccupation, and his idea seemed to be that if he could choose and obtain a new wife, and establish her at the Tuileries, and if she became the mother of an heir male, the mistakes which had brought the weight of the whole world upon him would only be causes without effects." M. Thiers adds this reflec-

tion: "It would have been useful, no doubt, to have had an undisputed heir, but it would have been better, a hundred times better, to have been prudent and wise. However, Napoleon who, despite this necessity of having a son, could not, after Tilsit, when at the zenith of his glory and power, make up his mind to sacrifice Josephine, brought himself at last to resolve upon it for the reason that he felt his Empire giving way, and he intended seeking in marriage the solidity which he ought to have secured by clever and moderate conduct."

Possibly, as he slept in the Castle of Schönbrunn, the victor was already thinking of asking the hand of the young Archduchess who habitually resided there. In any case he had no idea that in that very room where he formulated so many proud dreams and so many grand projects, his heir would die so sadly, the child whom the daughter of the German Cæsars was destined to bear him. When he appeared once more victorious in the Castle of Fontainebleau, on the 26th of October, 1809, the Empress Josephine knew that she was irrevocably condemned. The immediate result of the battle of Wagram was to be divorce.

CHAPTER III.

PRELIMINARIES OF MARRIAGE.

AUSTRIA had been in deadly fear during the Wagram campaign. She anxiously asked herself if the Hapsburgs, like the Bourbons of Spain, were not on the eve of disappearing from the list of Sovereigns, or if, like the Bourbons of Naples, they would not be reduced to the possession of merely a small portion of their States. The peace concluded at Vienna on the 14th of October, 1809, had somewhat diminished these serious apprehensions. But none the less did the situation of Austria remain most painful and distressing. As the Prince de Metternich says in his curious Memoirs: "The so-called peace of Vienna enclosed the Empire in a circle of iron, took away its communication with the Adriatic, and enveloped it from Brodz, a point on the extreme north-east on the Russian side, to the frontiers on the south-east in the direction of the Ottoman Empire, with a line of States placed either

under the rule of Napoleon or under his direct influence. The Empire, held as it were in a vice, was no longer free to move; and moreover, the victor had done all in his power to prevent the vanquished from recruiting his forces. By a secret article in the treaty of peace he had fixed the effective of the Austrian army at a maximum of 150,000 men."

A danger, more formidable perhaps than all the others, menaced the throne of the Hapsburgs—we mean the marriage, then considered by all the world to be very probable and very near at hand, of Napoleon with a sister of the Czar. Held fast between the gigantic Empires, between the Empire of the West and the Empire of the East, as between the hammer and the anvil, what would become of mutilated and paralysed Austria?

To ward off the dangers which threatened Austria, there was still one chance, and one only—only one, and that very problematical. Was it absolutely impossible for the Court of Vienna to bring about a matrimonial union such as that of which Russia was thinking? Marriage had often brought her good luck. Ought she to forget her famous maxim couched in this Latin line —

Bella gerant alii, tu felix Austria nube!
(Let others wage war, but do you, fortunate Austria, marry!)

The recent campaigns had been fatal to the dynasty of the Hapsburgs. A marriage would restore it.

A political party, which may be called the peace party, had succeeded to power in Vienna. M. de Stadion, a statesman with warlike tendencies, had been replaced as Minister of Foreign Affairs by a young and brilliant diplomatist, the Count de Metternich. When Ambassador in Paris, before the Wagram campaign, he had not succeeded in preventing war, but he had, nevertheless, left behind him pleasing reminiscences in the Court of Napoleon, where his successes as a man of the world and a *grand seigneur* had attracted general attention. He then bore only the title of Count, his father, the Prince de Metternich, being still alive. Desirous, perhaps, of proving that he did not look upon a reconciliation between Napoleon and Austria as an impossibility, he had left his wife, the Countess de Metternich, behind him in France during the war. When he succeeded to office he conceived a political system of which the French alliance was to be the basis, if not definitive, at all events provisional. But in order that such a system should be productive of all the advantages that might fairly be expected from it, the marriage of Napoleon with an Austrian Princess became a necessity, and M. de Metternich, in view of the matrimonial negotiations set on foot between the Courts of France and Russia, had not much faith, great as was his desire for such a consummation, in the possibility of a marriage between an Archduchess of Austria and the victor of Wagram.

Neither before nor after the conclusion of the treaty of Vienna had a single word on such a subject been exchanged between Napoleon and the Austrian Cabinet.

The Emperor of the French had made up his mind to a divorce, but he still thought that the woman who would replace Josephine would be the young Grand Duchess Anne, sister of the Russian Emperor Alexander. On the occasion of the interview of Erfürt he had spoken of this marriage, and the Czar had appeared to receive the idea in the most sympathetic manner. On the 22nd of November, 1809, the Duke de Cadore, Minister of Foreign Affairs, addressed the following despatch to the Duke de Vicence, Ambassador of France at St. Petersburg: — "Hints regarding divorce came at Erfürt to the ears of the Emperor Alexander, who mentioned it to the Emperor, and told him that his sister, Princess Anne, was at his disposal. His Majesty wishes you to broach the question frankly and simply to the Emperor Alexander, and speak to him in these terms: 'Sire, I have reason to think that the Emperor, urged on by all France, is preparing for a divorce. May I say that your sister may be relied upon? Will your Majesty be pleased to think over it for two days, and then frankly reply to me—not as the Ambassador of France, but as an individual who has at heart the interests of both families? I am not now making a formal

demand, I am merely soliciting an expression of your intentions. I venture, sire, upon this step because I am too well accustomed to tell your Majesty what I think to fear that I shall be compromised by it.'

"Do not mention it to M. de Romanzoff under any pretext whatever, and when you have had this conversation with the Emperor Alexander, and the one which will follow it two days later, you will entirely forget the communication I am now making to you. All you will then have to do will be to inform me of the qualities of the young Princess, and, above all, the period when she would be capable of child-bearing, because in our present calculations a difference of six months is an object of great importance. I need not impress upon your Excellency the most inviolable secrecy; you know what is due to the Emperor in this regard."

Messengers at that time occupied a fortnight in making the journey from Paris to St. Petersburg, and the reply to the despatch of the 22nd of November had not arrived when Napoleon, still ignorant as to who would be his second wife, announced to Josephine on the 30th of November that a divorce was irrevocably decided upon. The unhappy Empress held a last Court at the Tuileries before withdrawing from the fateful Palace, which she was destined, on the morning of the 16th of December following, to quit for ever. The reception was just over. Among

the persons who were waiting, on the steps of the grand staircase and in the vestibule, for their carriages to be announced, were side by side a man who stood well at Court, M. de Sémonville, and a young Secretary of the Austrian Embassy, M. de Floret. All the world then thought that the marriage with the Russian Grand Duchess was a settled thing. M. de Sémonville, in the midst of all this crowd of great personages, suddenly commenced the following conversation with his neighbour, the Austrian diplomatist :—

"Well, that is over and the thing is settled. Why did you not feel inclined to do it?"

"Who told you that we were not inclined?"

"So it is thought. Is it a mistake?"

"Perhaps."

"What, would you be willing? You might, possibly, but the Ambassador?"

"I answer for the Prince de Schwarzenberg."

"But the Count de Metternich?"

"No difficulty."

"And the Emperor?"

"None there either."

"And the Empress, who detests us?"

"You do not know her; she is ambitious, and might be won over to it."

M. de Sémonville went at once to give an account of this curious conversation to his friend, the Duke de Bassano, who lost no time in retailing it to the Emperor.

Napoleon appeared radiant, but not astonished. He said that similar news had just reached him from Vienna.

What had been going on in the Austrian capital? The Count de Narbonne was passing through it on his way to Munich, where he was going to represent France in the capacity of Minister Plenipotentiary. This amiable and distinguished man, of whom M. Villemain has written an excellent biography, had succeeded in winning the favour of Napoleon, who, after having reinstated him as a General on the list of the French Army, made him one of his ambassadors and aides-de-camp. M. de Narbonne, a type of elegance and bravery, had shone in the Court of Versailles and the Constituent Assembly. A lord-in-waiting to Madame Adelaide, daughter of Louis XV.; Minister of War under Louis XVI. in 1792; a friend of Madame de Stael; a refugee in England, Switzerland, and Germany, he had, in 1809, thanks to the kindness of Napoleon, resumed his military career, which had been interrupted for seventeen years. Towards the end of the campaign the Emperor despatched him as Governor to Raab, to watch over Hungary and Bohemia, possibly even to proclaim the independence of these two countries if Austria showed any unwillingness to accept the conditions which her conqueror wished to impose upon her. When the peace was signed General the Count de Narbonne betook himself to Vienna. He there

found two of his best friends, the Prince de Ligne, who had been one of the favourites of Queen Marie Antoinette, and the Count de Lamarck, who had been the confidant of Mirabeau.

One day when he was dining privately with them and M. de Metternich, the conversation turned upon politics. The Austrian Minister congratulated himself upon peace which, he said, made the future secure by its having cut short all hopes of trouble and anarchy. The Prince de Ligne adopted the same view. Then M. de Narbonne expressed himself much in these terms: "Well, gentlemen, I am astonished at your recent astonishment and your present confidence! Can the fact escape minds as clear as yours that all our peaces, be they easy or irksome, are only short-lived truces? And that we are marching now with hastened steps, that we have for a long time been dragged onwards towards an end, now near at hand, of which they are but the stages? This end is the reduction of the European Continent into the preponderating Empires. You see the rapid increase and progress in the world which one of these two Empires has made since 1800. As for the other, chance has not yet named it. It will be either Austria or Russia, according to the tendency which may be given to the peace of Vienna; for the peace itself is a danger if it is not the beginning of a more intimate alliance, a domestic alliance, and if it does not give back in its

consequences more than it took away in its initiation; in a word, you are ill-advised if you stop short in your leaning towards France."

On the following morning the Count de Narbonne was summoned to the Emperor Francis II., and the Austrian Sovereign gave him to understand that the eventuality of a marriage between Napoleon and the Archduchess Marie Louise was within the bounds of possibility. The Count de Narbonne had plenty to say in the same sense, and he gave eloquent expression to his conviction that such a crown to so much human prosperity, that an Archduchess once more confided to France, would finally incline Napoleon to be pacific always, to rejoice tranquilly in his glory instead of risking it incessantly, and to work for the happiness of nations in concert with the wise and virtuous monarch whose son by adoption he would become. M. de Narbonne recorded this conversation in a letter addressed to Fouché for perusal by the Emperor, who thus received advice of the secret intentions of the Court of Vienna six weeks before the Council was held under his presidency at the Tuileries, at which he asked his principal advisers for their opinions in regard to the choice of an Empress.

Since the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the two Powers, the Ambassador of Austria in Paris had been Prince Charles de Schwarzenberg, the warlike statesman who, later on, as General-in-Chief

of the Austrian army, was destined to strike such direful blows against France. In 1810 all his ideas were pacific, and he aspired only, in the interests of his country, to destroy the influence of his Russian colleague, Prince Kourakin. The Austrian Ambassador was ardently desirous that the Archduchess Marie Louise should become Empress of the French, for he was convinced that such an eventuality would be as profitable to himself as to his country. But he had not yet dared to hope for the realisation of his dream, when one of his friends, Count Alexandre de Laborde—who, after having served in the Austrian army, at the time of the emigration, returned to France, his own country, as Master of Requests in the Council of the State—encouraged him in his ideas, which at first had seemed somewhat chimerical. M. de Laborde, whose father, a Court banker before the Revolution, had rendered generous service to Marie Antoinette, was known and appreciated in Vienna. In connection with the marriage of Marie Louise he was the secret intermediary between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Napoleon and the Prince de Schwarzenberg, in whom he inspired such zeal for the French alliance that the Ambassador, as we shall soon see, signed the marriage contract of the Archduchess with Napoleon before he had even received the necessary authorisation from his Government.

On the 17th of September, 1809, nothing had been

decided. On the contrary, what appeared probable, if not certain, was the Russian marriage. On that day —the day when the *senatus consultum* relative to the divorce appeared in the *Moniteur*—a fresh despatch was sent from Paris to St. Petersburg by the Duke de Cadore, pressing the Court of Russia to reply at once "Yes," or "No." The reply of the Duke de Vicence to the first despatch, that of the 22nd of November, 1809, did not reach Paris until the 28th of December. The Ambassador said that his overtures had been favourably received by the Czar, but that a considerable amount of management and a little patience were necessary. The Emperor Alexander, he added, was personally well disposed, but his mother, whom he did not wish to offend, refused her consent, and the Czar requested a further delay of a few days before giving his reply. This delay displeased Napoleon. He, however, determined to wait, although waiting suited neither his taste nor his disposition.

In fine, at the beginning of the year 1810 the matrimonial negotiation with Austria was not begun. Neither the Sovereigns, nor the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, nor the Ambassadors of the two Powers had taken the initiative in the matter. It was a curious and characteristic fact that the person who gave the signal for it was the repudiated Empress Josephine. She sent for the Countess de Metternich to Malmaison, on the 2nd of January, 1810, and said to her, "I have

a project on which I am exclusively engaged, and its success alone would give me grounds for hoping that the sacrifice I have just made will not be absolutely thrown away. It is that the Emperor should marry your Archduchess. I spoke to him about it yesterday, and he said that his choice was not yet made. But I think it would be if he were certain of being accepted by you." Madame de Metternich, who was utterly astonished by the proceedings, hastened to apprise her husband of it in a letter dated the 3rd of January, 1810, which began thus: "I have some very extraordinary things to recount to you to-day, and I almost think that my letter will form an essential part of your despatches. First of all I must tell you that I was presented to the Emperor on Sunday last. I had only just requested it verbally at Champagny when I received a letter from M. de Ségur announcing that the Emperor had fixed Sunday for it, and that I must choose a lady of the Court to present me. In my wisdom I chose the Duchess de Bassano, and after having waited from two o'clock until half-past six in the evening, in company with about twenty other ladies, among whom were the Princess d'Isenbourg, Madame de Tyskiewitz, and others, I was introduced first of all, and the Emperor received me in a manner quite beyond my expectations. He evinced genuine pleasure at seeing me again, and at my having remained here during the war. He spoke to me of you,

and said, 'M. de Metternich occupied the first position in the Monarchy; he knows this country well, and may be useful to it.'"

The Countess de Metternich then narrates in her letter to her husband the confidential communications which had been made to her on the previous evening, at the Castle of Malmaison, by the Empress Josephine and Queen Hortense. Received by Hortense, pending the entrance of Josephine into the room, she was in no small degree astonished to hear the Queen of Holland say to her with somewhat of effusion: "You know that we are all Austrians at heart, but you would never imagine that my brother has been bold enough to advise the Emperor to ask for the hand of your Archduchess." Josephine reverted several times to the matrimonial project which she seemed to have so much at heart. "Yes," she said, "we must try to arrange that." Then she expressed her regret that M. de Metternich was not in Paris; for if he had been there he would doubtless have conducted the affair to a successful issue. "We must make your Emperor see clearly," she added, "that his ruin and that of his country are certain if he does not consent to this marriage. It is also, perhaps, the only way to prevent Napoleon bringing about a rupture with the Holy See."

The letter of the Countess de Metternich ended thus: "I have not seen the Queen of Holland again,

because she is ill. I have, therefore, nothing positive to tell you about this question; but if I were to tell you of all the honours that have been heaped upon me I should not finish for ever so long. At the last reception I played with the Emperor; you will easily understand that it was no small thing for me, but, nevertheless, I came out of the ordeal covered with glory. He commenced by paying me great compliments on my tiara of diamonds and on the everlasting gold robe, and then he asked me many questions about my family and all my relations; he would have it, notwithstanding all I could say to him, that Louis de Kaunitz was my brother. You can scarcely conceive what an effect this conversation produced. When it was over I was surrounded and flattered by all the high dignitaries, Marshals, Ministers, &c., &c. I have plenty of material now for philosophic reflections on the vicissitude of human affairs."

How well does this letter of the wife of the Austrian Prime Minister display the prestige with which Napoleon was then surrounded. The Sun-King in the most radiant days of his reign had never exercised so commanding an influence. The Emperor resembled Jupiter, whose slightest smile threw Olympus into ecstasies, and whose slightest frown made it tremble.

However, in spite of the overtures made by Josephine to the Countess de Metternich, Napoleon was still undecided in regard to the choice of his new wife.

One day when he was walking with M. Daru, for whom he had a great esteem, he entered into the following conversation with him:

"In your opinion which is the more advantageous for me—to marry the Russian or the Austrian?"

"Neither the one nor the other."

"The devil! You are difficult to please."

"Neither the one nor the other, but a Frenchwoman, and provided that the new Empress has not too many relations to be raised to the rank of princes and overwhelmed with riches, France will applaud your choice. The throne you occupy resembles no other; you have raised it with your own hands. You are at the head of a generous nation; your glory and its glory ought to be in common. It is not by imitating other monarchs, but by distinguishing yourself, that you will find your true greatness. You do not reign by the same title that they do, you should not marry as they do. The nation will be flattered by your choosing an Empress from out of its ranks, and thus it will contrive to see in your race a race entirely French."

"Bah! This is childish. If M. de Talleyrand hear you he would have but a poor idea of your political foresight. You do not look at this question as a statesman should. I must rally round my crown from within and without those who are not yet allied to it. My marriage gives me the means for effecting this. Do you imagine that the marriages of Sovereigns

are matters of sentiment? No, they are merely political. Mine cannot be decided by motives of internal politics. It is a question of assuring my influence abroad, and of increasing it by a close alliance with a powerful neighbour."

The reply of Russia had not arrived. No official overture had been made either to or by Austria. Napoleon was none the less certain in his own mind, or pretended to be equally certain, that his only embarrassment was a choice. The idea that two Emperors and a King—to say nothing of the other Sovereigns on whom he did not condescend to bestow a glance—were simultaneously disputing the honour of a family union with him flattered his self-love in no small degree. In reality he desired the Austrian marriage, but he would not then let his preference be known, so that he might prolong, in the eyes of his principal Councillors, an indecision in which his pride did not fail to find some advantage. He summoned them to an Extraordinary Council, which took place in the Tuileries, after Mass on Sunday, the 21st of January, 1810. The high dignitaries of the Empire, Champagny, Minister of Foreign Affairs; the Duke de Cadore; Maret, Secretary of State; the Duke de Bassano; M. Garnier, President of the Senate; and M. de Fontannes, President of the Corps Legislatif, were present at this solemn deliberation. The advantages and inconveniences of the Russian, Saxon, and

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a conversation with M. Pasquier, then Councillor of State, expressed his regret at not having been able to instil into his colleagues his own opinion as to the superiority of the Russian alliance. "I am not astonished at it," he said. "When one has only one good reason to give, and that cannot be given, it is only natural that one should be beaten. And you will see that my reason is so good that one sentence is enough to make the full force of it felt. I am morally certain that before two years are over we shall be at war with that one of the two Sovereigns whose daughter the Emperor has not married. Well, a war with Austria causes me no anxiety whatever; but I tremble at the idea of a war with Russia; its consequences are incalculable. I know that the Emperor is fully conversant with the road to Vienna; I am by no means so sure that he will find the road to St. Petersburg."

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an Austrian marriage, destined to become so disastrous to the Empire, should suddenly be opened in consequence of a conversation which took place for five minutes between two persons whom chance brought together on the steps of the staircase in the Tuileries at the very moment when that Palace, which had been inhabited for so long, was on the point of being abandoned by the unhappy Josephine. On reflecting on the concourse of all the events which succeeded, one might almost say that the destiny of the Empire was accomplished in that fatal quarter of an hour; for if, instead of Marie Louise, the Emperor had married the Grand Duchess, it is possible that, as the Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès presumed, the campaign of 1812 would not have taken place, and God knows what part that unfortunate expedition played in the fall of the first Empire."

How finite is human wisdom! How inexact are its calculations! This Austrian marriage, which discouraged the most inveterate enemies of the victor of Austerlitz, Jena, and Wagram, this magnificent marriage, which was to be the salvation of the Empire, was its ruin. The prodigious event which was the subject of so much congratulation amid all the transports of overwhelming joy, was perhaps the cause of the most frightful war and the greatest disaster of modern times. If he had not blindly counted upon the friendship of his father-in-law, would Napoleon, in

spite of all his audacity, have ever dared to entangle himself in the steppes of Russia without even having taken the precautionary measure of resuscitating Poland? He himself said that his marriage with an Austrian Archduchess was only an abyss covered with flowers.

The month of January was drawing to a close, and while at Paris so many people were already regarding the union of Napoleon and Marie Louise as very probable, the young Princess had not even any suspicion of the intentions of the Emperor of the French. The Count de Metternich, who, like his Sovereign, had maintained a complete reserve on so delicate a subject, wrote to his wife on the 27th of January, 1810: "The Archduchess is naturally ignorant of the views which are entertained in regard to her, and it is not from the Empress Josephine, who gives us so many unmistakable proofs of her confidence and unites in herself so many tender maternal qualities, that I shall conceal the numerous considerations which must necessarily occur to the Archduchess Louise when her establishment is first mentioned to her. But our princesses are but little accustomed to choose their husbands after the dictates of their own hearts. And the respect which a child, so good and so well brought up as the Archduchess, bears to the will of her father makes me hope that no obstacle will be encountered so far as she is concerned."

On the same day, the 27th of January, 1810, the Count de Metternich wrote to Prince Charles de Schwarzenberg, the Austrian Ambassador in France, a despatch which proves that at that date the matrimonial negotiations were not yet on foot: "His Imperial Majesty has learned with great interest the details transmitted to him by your Highness in your last despatches relative to the marriage of the Emperor of the French. It would be difficult to draw any definite conclusion from the various reports which have reached us. We can only attach a certain official character to the explanations, however vague they may have been, which the Minister of Foreign Affairs has given your Highness. The steps taken by M. Laborde and not interrupted, the leaning of so many persons attached to the Government in precisely the same direction, and especially the very direct overtures which have been made on the part of the Empress and the Queen of Holland to Madame de Metternich, would lead one to suppose that, so far as the future Empress is concerned, his mind is made up if our august master will agree to give him the Archduchess. The requests which are generally supposed to have been made in Russia, on the other hand, are at variance with this supposition. In any case the matter should be elucidated shortly after the arrival of the present courier, even if they have not already been so before that date. Too much has already been said to us to

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While the Court of Vienna thus maintained a prudent and noble reserve, Napoleon, chafing at the delays of the Russian Court, and only thinking of ridding himself of it, impatiently awaited the despatches from St. Petersburg. They arrived on the 6th of February, but without containing any definite information. The final delay of ten days asked for by the Czar from the Duke de Vicence expired on the 6th of January, and on the 21st there was still no reply from the Emperor. He went so far as to say that his mother no longer opposed the affair, but he mixed it up with political negotiations regarding Poland, and, undoubtedly in the hope of thus influencing the decisions of Napoleon, he protracted matters so as to induce further overtures being made to him. The Duke de Vicence at the same time announced in his

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despatches that in the opinion of the doctors the very juvenile Grand Duchess was not yet capable of having children, and that as she did not wish to change her religion she intended having a chapel and Greek priests in the Tuileries.

Napoleon hesitated no longer. On the very same day he caused a communication to be made to Prince Kourakin, the Russian Ambassador, to the effect that not being able to brook any further delay, he broke off the negotiations, and the same evening he sent to the Prince de Schwarzenberg, the Austrian Ambassador, to know if the contract of his marriage with the Archduchess Marie Louise could be signed on the following day.

The Austrian diplomatist had never supposed that events would progress so rapidly. He knew that his Court was favourably disposed, but he had not yet received any authority to conclude anything. The general instructions which had been addressed to him dated as far back as the 25th of December, 1809, and had not since been modified. The Ambassador, so he was told in those instructions, could only approach the matter subject to the restrictions which the Count de Metternich had thus drawn up:

"1. Every overture is to be received by you without any official character. Your Highness will not even entertain it except by making it understood that your personal goodwill is to be the reason of its being broached to us.

"2. You will state as a remark coming from yourself, that if no secondary consideration, and no prejudice will ever influence the resolutions of the Emperor, there are still laws by which he must always abide. His Majesty will never compel a beloved daughter to take any step which she may detest, and she will never consent to any marriage which is not in accordance with the precepts of our religion.

"3. You will be careful, moreover, to obtain the most precise information in regard to the advantages which France would offer Austria in the event of a family alliance being concluded."

When, on the evening of the 6th of February, 1810, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Napoleon asked the Prince de Schwarzenberg if he was ready to sign the marriage contract at the Tuileries on the following morning, the Ambassador was rejoiced, but surprised and also, perhaps, perplexed for a moment. If he abided by the instructions contained in the despatch of the 25th of December, 1809, he was certainly without authority to sign anything. As a matter of fact, he was not only ignorant as to whether the Archduchess Marie Louise had given her consent to the marriage, but he did not even know if the project had been mentioned to her. On the other hand, he had no information whatever about the manner in which the Austrian Court regarded the recent dissolution of the religious marriage of Napoleon and Josephine by the

diocesan authorities in Paris, who had acted without reference to the Pope. Finally, he was not in a position to stipulate, on behalf of his Government, for any political advantage as the price of the conclusion of the alliance. A timid diplomatist would have hesitated. But might not a messenger arrive at any moment from St. Petersburg bearing the definite acceptance of the Czar? Would Napoleon, so impatient and so accustomed never to be kept waiting, brook the least delay on the part of Austria? The Prince de Schwarzenberg burnt his boats. He said to himself that if his action was disavowed he would retire and plant cabbages in his garden; but that if his action was approved he would attain the summit of his ambition. Throwing aside, therefore, all delay and diplomatic scruples, he unhesitatingly replied that he was ready, and he asked for an interview with the Duke de Cadore, Minister of Foreign Affairs, in order to sign on the following day, in the Palace of the Tuileries, the marriage contract of the Emperor of the French, King of Italy, with the Archduchess of Austria, Marie Louise.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BETROTHAL.

On the 7th of February, 1810, M. Champagny, Duke de Cadore, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Prince Charles de Schwarzenberg, the Austrian Ambassador, met at the Tuileries, and signed, without the slightest difficulty, the marriage contract of Napoleon and the Archduchess Marie Louise. The text was an almost literal copy of the marriage contract of Marie Antoinette, signed forty years previously.

On leaving the Tuileries the Prince de Schwarzenberg despatched a courier to Vienna to announce the great news which was calculated to produce more surprise than joy there. "Monsieur le Comte," he wrote to M. de Metternich, "in signing the contract of marriage, while protesting that I was not in any way furnished with powers *ad hoc*, I considered that I had simply signed a document which would guarantee to the Emperor Napoleon the resolution taken by my

august Sovereign to anticipate every negotiation on this important subject. The despatches which you did me the honour to address to me, Monsieur le Comte, left me in no doubt as to the course I ought to pursue. His Majesty, according to the assurance of your Excellency, approves of my conduct by enjoining me to continue to work in the same sense; the marriage is, therefore, an affair which my Government reasonably judges to be of the greatest interest, and the realisation of which appears to it to be very desirable. When one knows the disposition of the Emperor Napoleon, it does not seem doubtful that, if I had displayed the worst possible grace on my side, he would have put this project on one side and would have sought for another. If this affair was somewhat hastily conducted, it was because Napoleon would not have it otherwise, and it appeared to me to be necessary to take advantage of a favourable moment. I am absolutely convinced in my own mind that I served my Sovereign well at this juncture, and if I have, possibly, had the misfortune to displease him by the part I have played without evasion, His Majesty is in a position to disavow my act; but in that case I should at once request my recall."

On the following day the Prince de Schwarzenberg sent to Vienna one of the Secretaries of his Embassy, M. de Floret, who was the bearer of this letter to M. de Metternich: "Paris, February 8, 1810. I send

you, dear Count, our friend Floret, who will acquaint you with every thing that has transpired. You will at once be able to convince yourself that I could not act otherwise than I did except at the risk of embroiling everything. If I had resolved not to sign, there would have been a rupture with us and an agreement either with Russia or Saxony. I formally declared that I was fully authorised to give the most positive assurances that a proposal of marriage would be very favourably received on the part of my Court, but that if I were not ready to sign a contract, that want of readiness must only be attributed to the impossibility of my Ministry supposing that such rapid progress could be made in an affair which had scarcely commenced. I beg of you, dear friend, to act so that this great matter shall encounter no difficulty, and that it shall be carried out with a good grace. I pity the Princess, I confess, but let her not forget that it will be a great thing to restore peace to two such nations, and to establish a guarantee of tranquillity and general repose. Floret will take with him my diary; he will comment on it verbally, there being no time to have it copied. You will, I hope, not object to this, as the departure of Floret will thus not be delayed. Conclude this business nobly, and you will have rendered an immense service to our country."

At the diplomatic reception which took place at the Tuileries on the 8th of February, Napoleon went up

request made by the Emperor of the French, so that I may not appear to be influencing her resolution."

M. de Metternich went at once to the Archduchess Marie Louise, and simply, without any specious or roundabout phrases, unfolded the matter to her without saying anything for or against the request, essentially his own. The Archduchess heard him with her habitual calm, and after a moment's reflection, asked him: "What does my father wish?" "The Emperor" replied the Minister, "has charged me to ask your Imperial Highness what your wishes are in a matter concerning your whole future existence. Do not ask me what the Emperor wishes; tell me what you yourself wish." "I only wish what my duty commands me to wish," replied Marie Louise. "When the interests of the Empire are at stake, they and not my wish must be consulted. Beg my father to fulfil his duty as a Sovereign, and not to subordinate it to my personal interest."

When M. de Metternich informed Francis II. of the result of his interview, the Sovereign expressed himself in these terms: "What you tell me does not surprise me. I know my daughter too well to have expected any other reply. I have employed the time you have spent with her in making up my mind. My consent to this marriage will assure the Monarchy of several years of political peace, which I shall be able to devote to healing its wounds. I owe myself

anything, neither did the diplomatic body. To borrow the expression used by M. de Metternich, Count Schouvaloff, the Russian Ambassador at the Court of Vienna, was literally petrified. The English were furious. The sudden eruption of a volcano would not have caused more consternation than did this news, for which nobody was in the least prepared. The first impression of the population was surprise almost amounting to incredulity. The passers-by stopped in the streets and asked each other—Is it true?

Marie Louise gave her consent with resignation rather than with pleasure. Metternich narrates, in his Memoirs, how he said to the Emperor Francis: "Sire, in the existence of States, as in the lives of private individuals, there are cases in which a third person could not put himself in the place of the one who has to take a resolution. These cases are most peculiarly those where calculation alone cannot bring about a resolution. Your Majesty is a Sovereign and a father; to your Majesty alone belongs the right to consult your duties as father and Emperor." "I leave the decision to my daughter," replied Francis II. "As I will never do her violence, I wish, before taking into consideration my duties as a Sovereign, to ascertain what she intends to do. Go and find the Archduchess, and then come and tell me what she has said to you. I do not wish to tell her myself of the

peror all the leisure he requires to organise, in accordance with his lofty conceptions, the vast Empire which he has created; that it will influence the destinies of Poland, Turkey, and Sweden; and, lastly, that it will redound to the undying fame of the Ministry of your Excellency. The news of the conclusion of this marriage will be received with shouts of joy throughout the entire Austrian Monarchy. France and the greater part of Europe will share that joy. As for the English Government, I do not think it possible, Monseigneur, for it to ward off the blow which will be struck by this great event; the party of the nation, in a word, will triumph over the cupidity of speculators, the hateful passions of the Ministry, and the warlike and constitutional fury of the King. Humanity will repose in the shade of the laurels of our august Emperor, and after having conquered half Europe, he will add to his numerous victories the most difficult and most consoling of all, the conquest of universal peace."

The first feeling experienced by all classes of Viennese society on hearing of the approaching marriage of the Archduchess was, as we have already said, surprise. This feeling speedily gave place to general rejoicing. The Count de Metternich wrote on the 19th February, 1810, to the Prince de Schwarzenberg: "It would be difficult for you to judge so far away of the sensation generally produced here by the news of the marriage.

The secret of the negotiation was so strictly kept that no hint of the affair reached the public until the very day of the arrival of M. de Floret. The first effect on 'Change here was such that the rate to-day would be 300 or even less if the Government were not interested in keeping it up to a higher figure, and even now it is only by having bought a million of specie in the space of two days that they have succeeded in stopping it at 370. Few facts, perhaps, have ever obtained so universal an assent from the real body of the nation."

M. de Metternich was exceedingly rejoiced, and congratulated himself on an event which was, he believed, his own work. "All Vienna," he wrote to his wife, "is occupied with the question of the marriage alone. It would be difficult to give you an idea of the excitement it has caused in the public mind, and of the extreme popularity of the affair. If I were the saviour of the world I could not receive more congratulations, or more genuine praise for the part which everybody is sure I must have played in it. In the promotions which will take place I shall have the Toison d'Or. If it comes to me now, it will not be for nothing; but it is no less true that very extraordinary circumstances, and those very much beyond all calculation, would have been needed to make me reach a point far above my ambition, for indeed I was never ambitious for anything. The *fêtes* here are very beautiful, and were it necessary to go to the end of the world to find what is

necessary it would be found. I recently sent the programme to Paris. Schwarzenberg will have shown it to you. The new Empress will please Paris, and ought to please them on account of her goodness, her great sweetness and simplicity. Rather plain than pretty, she has a very good figure, and when she is properly dressed, arranged, &c., &c., she will do perfectly well. I have begged her to have a dancing-master at once on her arrival, and not on any account to dance until she is thoroughly conversant with it. She has the greatest desire to please, and with that desire is sure to please."

The Austrian Court did everything with the best possible grace. It knew that Napoleon attached extreme importance to details of etiquette. It exhumed from the archives all that related to the marriages of Louis XIV., of Louis XV., of the Great Dauphin, the father of Louis XVI., and of Louis XVI. himself. Consultations were held with the old gentlemen of the Court of Versailles, especially with M. de Dreux-Brézé, Master of Ceremonies at the close of the old *régime*. Napoleon was tenaciously bent upon the marriage ceremony of Marie Louise being not only equal, but even superior to that of Marie Antoinette in matters of pomp and majesty. For he thought himself far above a dauphin of France. He was served to the bent of his wishes. Speaking of the personage who was to be charged with the escort of the Princess, Count Otto said in a despatch addressed on the 19th of

February, 1810, to the Duke de Cadore: "To give the commission the highest importance, the Emperor of Austria has confided it to the Prince de Trautmannsdorff, his Grand Master, who holds the highest rank on all solemn occasions in this country. The Dauphine was accompanied by a gentleman who held no great rank at Court. Moreover, the Emperor has ordered an increase in every way. The Dauphine had in her suite six ladies of the Palace and six chamberlains; the future Empress will have twelve of each. The Emperor will choose the most distinguished and best-known personages in the Court to fill these offices, and the Empress of Austria has reserved to herself the right of appointing ladies who are particularly distinguished by the antiquity of their families and the rank they hold in society. Finally, the Minister has assured me that nothing will be wanting to give the greatest brilliancy to the *cortége*."

The questions of etiquette occupied the French Ambassador extremely. He wrote to the Duke de Cadore on the 21st of February, 1810: "After having attentively perused the historical *précis* attached to the despatch of your Excellency, I have found only a few observations to make, but they appear to me to be of sufficient importance to engage the attention of the Minister. They are as follows:—

"1. As the religious ceremony is more solemn than all the others, it would seem that the difference be-

suddenly stopped, and many people withdrew before supper. I ought to say also that Count Schouvaloff has never been to congratulate me." The good humour of the Viennese increased every day, especially in business circles. The French Ambassador thus concluded his despatch: "Public opinion has made itself heard in a surprising manner, especially on 'Change. In less than two hours paper went up nearly 30 per cent. Confidence is being re-established everywhere, and it has had its influence also on the price of colonial produce, which went down on the spot. Yesterday an immense crowd gathered at the Castle to see the Archduchess leaving church. The people were delighted to see her with a radiant air of health and content. Two artists are engaged in painting her portrait. The best will be selected to be sent to Paris." Everything went on marvellously well without the least objection or obstacle. "Throughout this negotiation," wrote Count Otto, on the 17th of February, "no word has been said of any pecuniary advantage; a certain scruple has alone been displayed in regard to the legality of the divorce. A simple verbal declaration on my part sufficed to remove it." There was, therefore, nothing to trouble the calm of the fortunate Ambassador.

He is bitter against those who dragged him into the last war, and he declares that if he had been acquainted sooner with the loyalty and the magnanimity of the Emperor Napoleon, he would have taken good care not to follow their advice."

The Viennese, amiable and versatile, whose character bears a strong resemblance to that of the Parisians, had passed in a moment, in regard to Napoleon, from a hatred which appeared profound, to confidence which seemed boundless. They forgot that the wounds of Wagram were still bleeding, and thought only of the brilliant *fêtes* that were in preparation. They no longer wept, but smiled, and it might have been said that the French and the Austrians had always been brothers.

The French Ambassador wrote to the Duke de Cadore on the 21st of February, 1810: "Since the 16th the whole town has been occupied solely with the great marriage, the preparations for which are in progress. Almost every look is fixed on Madame the Archduchess. All those who have the honour of approaching her are questioned, and everybody is delighted to hear that she is in the best possible humour, and that she does not in any way conceal the satisfaction that this alliance gives her. The funds continue to rise in an astonishing manner, and colonial produce diminishes in the same proportion. Many people have had hard work to dispose of their gold. Never has public opinion been pronounced in so marked and so unanimous a

tween the Dauphine and the new Empress should be more forcibly marked. The former occupied a seat placed before the altar but without a canopy. Queen Marie Leczinska, daughter of King Stanislas, was placed under a canopy between the King and Queen of Poland.

"2. The representative and personal rank of his Highness the Prince of Neuchâtel was far superior to that of the Marquis de Durfort, who, in 1770, fulfilled analogous functions, and it appeared to me that a more solemn form should be given to the reception. The Count de Metternich has completely satisfied me on these two points. He informed me that the Emperor would issue the most positive orders that the same honours should be paid to the future Empress of the French as were paid to the Empress of Austria on the occasion of the solemnities of the last marriage. The dais and all accessories of sovereign rank would belong by right to the new Empress, and the Emperor is even going to do on this occasion a thing unprecedented in this Monarchy; he will yield the first place at table to his daughter, and will himself occupy the second. Nothing will be neglected to give these solemnities the greatest brilliancy, and to manifest the immense importance that is attached here to the bonds which are about to be tied. The Emperor is so enchanted with this alliance that he even speaks of it to those private individuals who have the honour of approaching him.

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manner. Many people who had retained their silver plate in the hope of hiding it, or of sending it to some foreign country, are hastening to-day with it to the mint, and look upon the bonds they receive in exchange as ready money. The heads of the great houses are ordering other plate to replace that which has necessarily been sacrificed to the State. Everybody shows himself disposed to give all his fortune, being well persuaded that after such an alliance the Government cannot fail to keep its engagements."

The Viennese are possessed of a lively imagination. Going, as if with one bound, from one extreme to the other, they already pictured the subjects of the Emperor Francis II. as making wars of ambition and conquest and going halves with the subjects of the Emperor Napoleon. It seemed as if the father-in-law and son-in-law were going to have all Europe at their feet. "The more the public mind increases in favour to France," said Count Otto, in the same despatch, "the more one sees the old animosity of the Austrians against Prussia and Russia burst forth. The politicians of the *cafés* are already amusing themselves with a thousand combinations, by means of which the Emperor of Austria will recover Silesia, and increase his dominions towards the East. The discontented Russians, who are to be found here in great numbers, are very much astonished by this sudden change. They may be heard saying to each other, 'Only a few days

ago we stood very high in Vienna. To-day everybody adores the French, and wants to make war on us.' Count Schouvaloff himself holds aloof! Sensible people do not in any way share this warlike disposition. They desire universal peace, and bless an alliance which seems bound to secure it for many years. In their eyes even a successful war is always a great calamity. Peace has its triumphs also, and this last negotiation promises one of the greatest known in history."

The *Gazette du Gouvernement*, which was eagerly bought in the streets of Vienna, officially and definitively published the great news. Its issue of the 24th of February, 1810, contained the following article:—

"The formal betrothal between the Emperor of the French, King of Italy, and her Imperial and Royal Highness the Most Serene Archduchess Marie Louise, eldest daughter of his Imperial and Royal Majesty, our very gracious Lord, was signed in Paris on the 7th inst. by the Ambassador Prince de Schwarzenberg and the Duke de Cadore, Minister of Foreign Affairs. The exchange of ratifications of this contract took place on the 21st of this month at Vienna between the Minister of State and Foreign Affairs, Count de Metternich Winneburg, and the Imperial Ambassador of France, Count Otto de Meslon. All the nations of Europe see in this an earnest of peace, and look forward to the joy of a happy future after so many

conflicts undergone." The day this article appeared in the official journal, the Ambassador of France wrote to the Duke de Cadore: "The Emperor is very fond of the Princess. He rejoices over the brilliant fortune she is about to make. He has not been so content, so moved, so occupied for a very long time. All that can contribute to embellish the *fêtes* now in preparation is of the greatest interest to him, and with scarcely any exceptions, all his subjects partake of the amiable anxiety of their Sovereign."

The French Ambassador could not contain himself for joy. He saw everything in the best possible light —Marie Louise, the Court, all Austria. His despatch of the 17th of February was full of enthusiasm. He there traced, with a hand moved by emotion, this portrait of the august bride, and one can well understand how eagerly Napoleon must have read such a despatch: "Everybody agrees in saying that Madame the Archduchess unites with a very amiable disposition a strict sense of right and all the talents which proceed from a careful education. She is universally beloved at Court, and is quoted as a model of sweetness and goodness. A pleasant bearing without any affectation, modesty without embarrassment, speaking several languages very well, and knowing how to ally a noble bearing to much affability. In entering the world, which she has scarcely seen, her good qualities will no doubt develop further, and will cast over her

person still more grace and interest. She is tall and well-made, and enjoys excellent health. Her features appeared to me to be regular and full of sweetness."

The Empress of Austria herself, formerly renowned for her anti-French ideas, and whose opposition, or at least discontent, might have been feared, associated herself completely with the joy of her husband. Count Otto said on this subject in a despatch on the 19th of February: "The Empress shows herself extremely favourable to this marriage. In spite of the bad state of her health, she has declared her desire to be present at all the *fêtes*, and she on all occasions speaks of them with delight."

The Ambassador was such an optimist that he was even growing to regard the marriage of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette as a happy precedent. In the same despatch to the Duke de Cadore he actually says: "The names of Kaunitz and de Choiseul are in every mouth, and there is a desire to see once more the calm days which followed the alliance concluded by those two Ministers. They had both been Ambassadors in France and in Austria like your Excellency and the Count de Metternich." Nothing could be compared to the satisfaction of the French diplomatist except the disgust of the Russian Ambassador. "The Russian cliques," added Count Otto, "are the only ones which do not take part in the rejoicings. When the first news arrived at a ball given in a Russian house, the violins

suddenly stopped, and many people withdrew before supper. I ought to say also that Count Schouvaloff has never been to congratulate me." The good humour of the Viennese increased every day, especially in business circles. The French Ambassador thus concluded his despatch: "Public opinion has made itself heard in a surprising manner, especially on 'Change. In less than two hours paper went up nearly 30 per cent. Confidence is being re-established everywhere, and it has had its influence also on the price of colonial produce, which went down on the spot. Yesterday an immense crowd gathered at the Castle to see the Archduchess leaving church. The people were delighted to see her with a radiant air of health and content. Two artists are engaged in painting her portrait. The best will be selected to be sent to Paris." Everything went on marvellously well without the least objection or obstacle. "Throughout this negotiation," wrote Count Otto, on the 17th of February, "no word has been said of any pecuniary advantage; a certain scruple has alone been displayed in regard to the legality of the divorce. A simple verbal declaration on my part sufficed to remove it." There was, therefore, nothing to trouble the calm of the fortunate Ambassador.

CHAPTER V.

THE RELIGIOUS DIFFICULTY.

THE marriage was officially announced. Suddenly an incident supervened which caused the greatest embarrassment to the Ambassador of Napoleon, and was within an ace, if not of hindering, at all events of postponing the marriage. The unforeseen difficulty which arose at the last moment was a religious difficulty, and in a Court as pious as that of Austria, it could not fail to produce a very lively impression.

Even in Paris the dissolution of the religious marriage of Napoleon and Josephine had not taken place without giving rise to grave objections, and the Emperor was surprised to hear his uncle, his Grand Almoner, Cardinal Fesch, state that the matter could not be settled of its own initiative. Under such circumstances, when crowned heads are in question, and when reasons of State are paramount, recourse must be had to the Pope. Louis XII. dissolved his marriage with Jeanne

of France through the instrumentality of Pope Alexander VI. Henry IV. had recourse to Pope Clement VIII. to annul his union with Marguerite of Valois. Napoleon himself, in connection with the marriage contracted by his brother Jérôme with Madame Paterson, applied, but without success, to Pope Pius VII. Now that the Pontifical Sovereign was his prisoner, Napoleon could no longer approach him, and moreover, the Pope, who had assisted at the coronation of Josephine, and felt profound sympathy for her, would not be very likely to declare, as the official diocesan was not afraid to do, that she had never, from a religious point of view, been anything more than the concubine of the Emperor.

There existed, at the beginning of the year 1810, an Ecclesiastical Committee, consisting of Cardinal Fesch, president; Cardinal Maury, so celebrated in the time of the Constituent Assembly, and now one of the Imperial Courtiers; the Archbishop of Tours; the Bishops of Nantes, Trèves, Evreux, and Verceil; and the Abbé Emery, Superior of the Seminary of Saint Sulpice. The Emperor entrusted to this Committee the task of deciding whether the official diocesan was competent to pronounce a canonical dissolution of the marriage with Josephine.

The Committee decided on the 2nd of January, 1810, that the official diocesan was competent. However, neither Cardinal Fesch nor the Abbé Emery signed

this decision. The Cardinal was not unmindful that he himself, by special authority from Pius VII., had bestowed the nuptial benediction on the married pair on the night of the 1st of December, 1804.

On the same day that the Ecclesiastical Committee decided in favour of the competency of the official diocesan, they received from the Archchancellor Cambacérès a communication to the effect that the nuptial benediction pronounced on Napoleon and Josephine had neither been preceded, nor accompanied, nor followed by the formalities prescribed by the canonical laws, that is to say, it had taken place in default of the presence of the proper priest (meaning the *curé* of the parish), and in the absence of witnesses. To these two causes of annulment the communication added a third, which came as a surprise to the officials concerned. This cause, which, as a rule, is only applicable to a minor taken by surprise and outraged, is the default of consent—yes, actually the want of consent on the part of the Emperor. Napoleon made no attempt to conceal that the first two reasons for dissolution were mere equivocations. He could not, surely, have failed to confess to himself that at the moment when he was destining his uncle, his Grand Almoner, to bless his marriage with Marie Louise, it was at least somewhat extraordinary that he should call in question his qualification in regard to the consecration of his union with Josephine. As for the absence of witnesses, that was in accor-

dance with a special dispensation granted by the Pope, who was anxious to avoid the scandal of announcing to the whole world that for eight years Napoleon and Josephine, married according to civil but not religious rites, had been living from the Church's point of view in open concubinage, in spite of all the entreaties of the Empress that an end should be put to a state of things which wounded her conscience and constituted in her mind a constant menace of divorce. The Emperor, then, especially alleged the want of consent on his part. Count d'Haussonville has said on this subject in his remarkable work, "L'Église Romaine et le premier Empire": "One can hardly understand, putting on one side the religious sentiment in regard to the sanctity of marriage, that such a man should have consented to represent himself as having desired, on the eve of this great ceremony of coronation, to deceive at one and the same time his uncle, who was marrying him, his wife, whom he seemed joyfully to associate with his glory, and the venerable pontiff who, despite his age and infirmities, had hastened from such a distance to invoke upon his head the blessing of the Most High. Such a supposition is shocking not only to delicacy, but to the maxims of the simplest right-dealing and the commonest honesty."

The official body halted at no such scruples. It had been constituted into a jurisdiction in two degrees—the diocesan tribunal, and the metropolitan tribunal.

Both pronounced in favour of the nullity of the marriage. The metropolitan tribunal, while admitting the validity of the first two reasons for dissolution, viz., the default of the presence of the proper priest and the absence of witnesses, based its judgment principally on the want of consent on the part of the Emperor. The diocesan tribunal declared that by way of reparation for the offence against the laws of the Church, Napoleon and Josephine should be bound to pay a certain sum in charity to the poor of the parish of Notre Dame. The metropolitan tribunal annulled this clause as irreverent.

The official decision was forwarded to Count Otto, the French Ambassador in Vienna. The originals even of the two documents, that is to say the judgment of the metropolitan tribunal, were sent to him. The Ambassador mentioned it to the Emperor Francis in order to reassure the conscience of that prince, but he did not show him the documents themselves, and three days after the ratification of the matrimonial convention, he sent them back to Paris. "I confess, Monseigneur," he wrote in a despatch addressed to the Duke de Cadore on the 28th of February, 1810, "that in returning these documents to Paris so hurriedly, I had a presentiment of discussions to which they might give rise on the part of foreign ecclesiastics. All was over, the Emperor of Austria was satisfied, the marriage contract was ratified, the ratifications of the marriage

had been exchanged for three days, when for the first time mention was made of these documents, which excited the curiosity and fervour of a few too influential prelates. I am all the more confident in my assertion that nobody had thought of these documents before that date because the Minister, when he asked me, on the 15th inst., on my word of honour, my personal opinion as to the nullity of the first marriage of his Majesty, would not have failed to add that he had asked the Prince de Schwarzenberg for proofs, and that he was awaiting his reply. My declaration sufficed to bring about the ratification on the following day." (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

Whence came these tardy scruples and unexpected difficulties? What had taken place? The objections came neither from the Emperor Francis nor the Count de Metternich, but from a priest, the Archbishop of Vienna, whose duty it was in the Church of the Augustines to conduct the marriage by procuration. This prelate, who shared all the ideas of the French exiles, and who had far more respect for the Pope than for Napoleon, thought it his duty to examine the official judgment himself, and he energetically demanded a perusal of the original. Thence proceeded the great despair of the French Ambassador, who wrote to the Duke de Cadore the following despatch full of anxiety:—"For the last three days the Minister of Foreign Affairs has been negotiating with the Arch-

bishop in order to conquer his scruples on the subject of the nullity of the first marriage of his Majesty. This prelate now persists in saying that he cannot give his nuptial benediction without seeing the documents I have returned to your Excellency, and of which M. de Metternich has never said a word during the course of the negotiations. It is remarkable, Monseigneur, that as the Archbishop was consulted a long time ago, nobody has spoken to me of his scruples. I have every reason to believe that this old man only commenced to move when he heard of the arrival of documents whose validity he was in a position to contest. In any case, the clergy of France would not have wished to submit their judgment to that of a foreign prelate. The intention of your Excellency was to satisfy the Emperor of Austria, the sole authority which, in an affair of so much importance, we can consider competent, since the fate of his daughter is in question. How should we stand, Monseigneur, if this prelate, adopting other principles than those which have formed the basis of the judgment of our official tribunal, should make up his mind to invalidate it? How can we submit to a new discussion a treaty ratified before the eyes of all Europe, and published by order of the Emperor of Austria himself? Can one believe that the Archbishop, who at first approved of this alliance, only to-day feels the scruples which have been inspired in him by a foreign faction, ready to undertake any-

thing in order to oppose the genius of peace? I am told that the so-called Bishop of Carcassonne lives altogether with the Archbishop. Possibly the Nuncio, who is still here, has also brought some influence to bear on this occasion. The proof of the existence of this action, Monseigneur, is the importance which certain intriguers have sought to attach to a pretended excommunication of his Majesty by the Pope. The Count de Metternich assures me, nevertheless, that neither the Nuncio nor the Archbishop has shown any desire to allude to this latter hindrance. The Emperor himself, resenting in this instance the blow aimed at the dignity of a crown, repulses this indecent objection with the contempt it deserves.

"The Minister has had several futile interviews with the Archbishop, who seems desirous of bringing the matter before his tribunal. The Emperor himself is very anxious; there is a desire to gain time, and a fear to-day lest the Prince de Neuchâtel should arrive too soon. If he does not arrive until the 3rd of March, steps will be taken to postpone the nuptial benediction until the 11th, the date on which it is hoped that the official judgments may be returned. But, even in this case, the Ambassador Extraordinary will perhaps have need of all the firmness of his character to make head against this cabal which is bringing trouble into the family of the Emperor, and of whom the Archbishop is merely the instrument. I have done all I could,

Monseigneur, to make the Minister feel how seriously, in the present state of things, the dignity of his Court is compromised. He has shown me a series of questions propounded by the Archbishop, to which it would be impossible to reply without appearing to recognise a tribunal with which we ought not to have anything to do. Never was a negotiation of such great importance interrupted by an incident so singular." (Despatch of Count Otto to the Duke de Cadore, February 28, 1810. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

The perplexities of the Ambassador were very great. They would have been still greater had he been in possession of the documents for which he was asked. And, as a matter of fact, would he have been justified in submitting to a foreign ecclesiastical tribunal documents which it was his duty to confide to the Emperor of Austria alone, for the purpose of removing personal scruples which the Sovereign might feel? The Count de Metternich had told the Ambassador on the 24th of February that the ceremony would take place in spite of the opposition of the Archbishop. And on the following day M. de Metternich was convinced to the contrary.

With the object of gaining time, Count Otto wrote to the Ambassador Extraordinary of Napoleon, the Prince de Neuchâtel, to ask him to contrive that his arrival in Vienna should be postponed until the 4th of March. The Carnival would be brought to a

close by the brilliant *fetes* for which such great preparations were being made. Ash Wednesday and the three following days would be consecrated to devotion, and on the 11th the ceremonies of the Church would take place if, as was hoped, the documents asked for had been returned from Paris by that date.

After several days of very painful uncertainty for the Court of Vienna, as well as for the French Ambassador, the difficulties were smoothed over. Count Otto wrote to the Duke de Cadore on the 3rd of March, 1810: "My long silence must have astonished your Excellency; but it was rendered necessary by the most extraordinary circumstances in which I have been placed for many years. Only to-day have we emerged from the difficulty raised by the Ecclesiastical Committee and from its scruples. Seven long days and some nights have been spent in searching the files of the *Moniteur* and the *Bulletin des Lois* to prove the nullity of the first marriage of his Majesty the Emperor. Nothing could reassure the timorous conscience of the Archbishop. I first of all refused, and I held out for twenty-four hours. After many discussions, and an almost entire change in the document, I was asked to sign. I consented to-day to give up the paper, a copy of which I have the honour to annex, but on the express condition signed by the Minister, that the document should be shown only to the Archbishop for the purpose of removing

his scruples, and that on no account should it be made public."

This is the text of the document mentioned by M. Otto: "I, the undersigned, Ambassador of H.M. the Emperor of the French, depose that I have seen and read the two judgments of the two official diocesan bodies of Paris concerning the marriage between their Majesties the Emperor and the Empress Josephine, and that the purport of these judgments is that, in conformity with the ecclesiastical Catholic laws established in the French Empire, the said marriage has been declared entirely void, because, at the conclusion of that marriage, the most essential formalities required by the Church were neglected, such formalities having been at all times recognised in France as necessary to the validity of a Catholic marriage. I depose, moreover, that in conformity with the civil laws in existence at the time of the conclusion of the marriage, every conjugal union was contracted on the principle that it could be dissolved at will by the contracting parties. In faith of which I have signed this present declaration, and have sealed it with the seal of my arms."

In his despatch of the 3rd of March, 1810, the Ambassador added, in connection with the document we have just transcribed: "The sole motive, Monseigneur, which could have induced me to adopt this expedient was the persuasion that the Archbishop

would only consent to give his benediction after he had seen the two documents; and it seemed to me to be very dangerous to hand over these two judgments to the caprice of an old man under the influence of two exiled priests. In the end, this step succeeded, and the delay in the arrival of the Prince de Neuchâtel prevented any suspicion even being aroused in the public mind of the discussion which caused us so much anxiety. The Archbishop is satisfied; all the ceremonies will take place according to the programme, except such alterations as may be necessary in consequence of the bad roads. The marriage will take place on the 11th of March, and in order to recover the time lost, the Archduchess will set out somewhat sooner, and should very easily reach Paris on the 27th. The delay in the nuptial benediction can now only be attributed to the circumstances which delayed the journey of the Prince de Neuchâtel. During Lent Sunday is looked upon as the only fortunate day for marriages, and as Ash Wednesday is very near at hand, it is impossible that this religious ceremony should take place earlier than the 11th." (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

The last difficulties had disappeared, and the *fêtes* might begin.

CHAPTER VI.

THE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY.

In Vienna the animation was extreme. The great event in preparation was the sole subject of conversation among all classes of society. "The ceremonies and *fêtes*," wrote the French Ambassador, on the 2nd of March, 1810, "will be precisely the same as those which took place on the occasion of the marriage of the Emperor with the reigning Empress. Each inhabitant of Vienna is doing his utmost to give evidence of his rejoicing on this occasion. Painters are employed night and day in making transparencies and emblems. It may truly be said that these *fêtes* will be really national. Every morning curious crowds arrive in their thousands at the Residency to see the Archduchess come out after Mass. Her portraits are sought after everywhere. Neither do the Emperor and the Archduchess want for surroundings, the crowd envelops them, the masqueraders

say a thousand and one kind things to them, and one might go so far as to say that this alliance has increased the already great popularity of the Emperor." On the following day, the 3rd of March, Count Otto wrote: "I to-day presented M. de Narbonne to the Emperor, the Empress, and the Archduchess; and I took advantage of the opportunity to convince myself once more as to the joy which this happy alliance causes the Court. The Empress spoke in the highest terms of her step-daughter, and that young Princess talked to us with great interest about France, Paris, and the arts she hopes to cultivate in that interesting place of residence."

Much impatience was manifested for the arrival of the Ambassador Extraordinary whom the Emperor of the French had selected to ask formally for the hand of the Archduchess, to assist at the marriage by procuration, which was to be celebrated in the Church of the Augustines at Vienna, and to conduct the bride to France. This Ambassador Extraordinary was Marshal Berthier, Sovereign Prince de Neuchâtel, husband of the Princess Marie Elisabeth Amélie Françoise of Bavaria, Vice-Constable of France, Grand Huntsman, Chief of the First Cohort of the Legion of Honour, &c., &c. A most brilliant reception was prepared for him. M. Otto had written to the Duke de Cadore on the 21st of February, 1810: "In regard to the honours I thought due to H.S.H. the Prince de

Neuchâtel, the Count de Metternich told me that the Prince would not be regarded here merely as Ambassador Extraordinary, but as a Sovereign Prince, a high dignitary of the Empire, the friend and companion-in-arms of his Majesty; that there could be no more comparison between him and the Marquis de Durfort than between the future Empress and Madame la Dauphine; that Prince Paul Esterhazy had already been ordered to proceed to the frontier to welcome his Highness; and that, besides all this, an imperial commissioner would be sent to superintend his journey and to render to him during its course the honours due to him; that he would be lodged and entertained by the Court, that everything necessary would be supplied to him, it being perfectly well known that at so inclement a season, and in so short a time, he could not possibly have arranged to have with him all the various things necessary for his proper display."

The formal entry of the Prince de Neuchâtel into Vienna was made with the greatest pomp. M. Otto thus describes it in his despatch of the 6th of March, 1810: "The Prince de Neuchâtel has just arrived. The ceremony was carried out with the utmost magnificence. The Court sent its handsomest State-carriages, and the highest personages also on this occasion sent their equipages and servants in their most gorgeous liveries. Couriers and footmen were alone wanting to the Prince. I sent a dozen of my

servants in the State livery of the Emperor to accompany his carriage. The Sovereign himself could not have been received with greater magnificence, brilliancy, and rejoicing than our Ambassador Extraordinary has been; and the sight was really most touching, by reason of the contrast of a thousand reminiscences. To shorten the triumphal progress of the Prince, from the Summer Palace of Schwarzenberg to the Rue de Carinthie, thousands of workmen had been employed to construct a bridge over the ruins of the very fortifications which our soldiers had blown up. Vivas and shouts of joy accompanied the Vice-Constable as far as the door of the hall of audience, and thence to his residence. The Court has lodged him magnificently in the Chancellerie of the Empire, where he is served as if he were the Emperor himself."

Count Otto thus records in the same despatch what transpired on the evening of this brilliant day, the 10th of March, 1810: "In the evening there was a great *fête* in the Apollo room. The whole city was present. The Prince was received there with the same enthusiasm that greeted him in the morning. The Emperor was present in person, with his brothers the Archdukes. He received the congratulations and blessings of a people intoxicated with joy. The Prince scarcely left the Emperor, who conversed with him in the most cordial and amiable manner. The

Monarch and the Vice Constable were the cynosures of every eye in the countless crowd around them, and everybody rejoiced to see by the side of the Sovereign of Austria the friend and companion-in-arms of the Emperor Napoleon. It was remarked that the Archduke Charles appeared for the first time in the Apollo room with the Emperor; he will take a prominent part in the marriage ceremony, in regard to which he manifests the greatest satisfaction. The Vice Constable was charmed with the Prince's conversation. He is to dine with him to-morrow."

General the Count de Lauriston had just arrived in Vienna, bearing letters addressed by the Emperor Napoleon to the Emperor and Empress of Austria. We have discovered the replies in the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Here they are:

Letter of the Emperor of Austria to the Emperor of the French. "March 6th, 1810. My brother, General the Count de Lauriston has handed me the letter of your Imperial Majesty of the 23rd of February. In confiding to your hands, my brother, the future of my beloved daughter, I give your Majesty the greatest possible proof of my confidence and esteem. There are moments when the holiest of our affections overshadows every other consideration foreign to it. May your Imperial Majesty only find in this letter the expression of the feelings of a father whom eighteen years of sweet companionship have

attached to a child gifted by Providence with all the qualities which constitute inward happiness. Summoned away from me, she will continue to render herself as worthy of my constant affection as she will contribute to the happiness of the husband whose throne she goes to share, and to the welfare of his subjects. Receive the assurance of my sincere friendship, as well as the high consideration with which, my brother, I remain, your Imperial and Royal Majesty's good brother, FRANCIS."

Letter of the Empress of Austria to the Emperor Napoleon. "March 6th, 1810. My brother, I hasten to thank your Imperial Highness for the mark of confidence contained in the letter you have been good enough to send me by the Count de Lauriston. The tender attachment of the best of fathers for the child of his affection stands in no need of advice. Our wishes are the same. I have the same confidence that he has in the happiness of your Majesty and our child. But I wish your Imperial Majesty to receive from me the assurance of the many good qualities of mind and heart which distinguish the latter. What might appear to proceed from excessive fondness on the part of her father cannot be suspected under the hand of her mother by adoption. Believe me, my brother, the happiest days for me will be those which will so appear to you by reason of the eternal bond which is on the point of being established between you. With

feelings of friendship and high esteem, I am, your Imperial Majesty's good sister, MARIE LOUISE."

The States of the various provinces of the Monarchy sent deputations to Vienna to congratulate the Archduchess. The reception of those from the Austrian States took place on the 6th of March. The ceremony is thus described in a despatch from M. Otto:—"The *fête* yesterday was very brilliant. In the morning the deputation of the Austrian States, forming a procession of more than thirty carriages, was conducted to the Castle to congratulate the Archduchess, who received them under a canopy. In spite of her nervousness, very natural at her age, the Princess replied in a speech which astonished and touched all her hearers. She will also receive deputations from Hungary, Bohemia, and Moravia. It is thought that she will reply to the first-named in Latin. At one o'clock we betook ourselves to the Palace to dine with their Majesties and the Imperial family. The only strangers were the Prince Vice Constable, the Count de Narbonne, the Count de Lauriston, and myself. The Empress was better in health and more affable than ever. The two Ambassadors took precedence over the Archdukes. The Prince Vice Constable was placed on the left of the Empress, I was on the right of the Archduchess, the Emperor being in the middle and taking part in the conversation on both sides. The conversation was very animated. The Archduchess

would only consent to give his benediction after he had seen the two documents; and it seemed to me to be very dangerous to hand over these two judgments to the caprice of an old man under the influence of two exiled priests. In the end, this step succeeded, and the delay in the arrival of the Prince de Neuchâtel prevented any suspicion even being aroused in the public mind of the discussion which caused us so much anxiety. The Archbishop is satisfied; all the ceremonies will take place according to the programme, except such alterations as may be necessary in consequence of the bad roads. The marriage will take place on the 11th of March, and in order to recover the time lost, the Archduchess will set out somewhat sooner, and should very easily reach Paris on the 27th. The delay in the nuptial benediction can now only be attributed to the circumstances which delayed the journey of the Prince de Neuchâtel. During Lent Sunday is looked upon as the only fortunate day for marriages, and as Ash Wednesday is very near at hand, it is impossible that this religious ceremony should take place earlier than the 11th." (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

The last difficulties had disappeared, and the *fêtes* might begin.

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On the day but one afterwards, the 8th of March, the formal demand for the hand of the Archduchess Marie Louise was made in great pomp at the Palace by Marshal Berthier, Prince de Neuchâtel. As soon as he had made his speech the Archduchess entered, magnificently dressed and accompanied by her entire household. Count Anatole de Montesquion, orderly officer to the Emperor Napoleon, had just arrived in Vienna, bearing a miniature portrait of his Sovereign. This officer was to be present at the marriage, and take to Paris the first news of its conclusion. As soon as the Archduchess appeared the Prince de Neuchâtel presented her with the portrait of Napoleon, and Marie Louise at once had it placed on her bosom by the Grand Mistress of her household. The Ambassador Extraordinary then went to the room of the Emperor of Austria, and afterwards to the Archduke Charles, to whom he expressed the wish of the Emperor Napoleon to be represented by that Prince in the marriage by procuration which was to be celebrated on the 11th of March in the Church of the Augustines by the Archbishop of Vienna.

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asked me a number of questions which proved the seriousness of her tastes."

According to the despatch of the Ambassador, the principal questions addressed to him by Marie Louise were as follows:—"Is the Musée Napoléon sufficiently near the Tuileries for me to go there and study the relics of antiquity and the beautiful monuments in it?"—"Is the Emperor fond of music?"—"May I have a master for the harp? I am very fond of that instrument."—"The Emperor is so good to me that he will, no doubt, allow me to have a botanical garden. Nothing would give me greater pleasure."—"They tell me that there are many wild and picturesque spots in Fontainebleau. I know nothing more interesting than a lovely country."—"I owe the Emperor many thanks for allowing me to bring Madame Lazansky with me, and for having appointed the Duchess de Montebello; they are two very worthy ladies."—"I hope the Emperor will be indulgent towards me; I do not know how to dance a quadrille, but if he wishes it, I will have a dancing master."—"Do you think that the voyage of Humboldt will soon be finished? I have read all that has appeared with much interest."

Count Otto adds in his faithful report:—"I told her Imperial Highness that the Emperor wished to know her tastes, and even her habitual mode of life. She replied that everything suited her, that her tastes were very simple, that all modes of life were

alike to her, and that she would conform entirely to that of his Majesty, her only desire at heart being to please him. I cannot help remarking, Monseigneur, that during my interview with her Imperial Highness, which lasted over an hour, she never said a single word to me about the fashions or the sights of Paris."

In the evening there was a ridotto at which the Emperor was present with all his family, and of which the Ambassador in the same despatch gives the following description:—"More than six thousand persons of all ranks, invited by the Court, filled the immense rooms, which were richly decorated and lighted. At the end of the first room was a most magnificent *buffet* representing a temple lighted up by a thousand lamps artistically concealed. The Genius of Victory, on an altar, was placing a crown of laurels on the escutcheons of the august pair. The N and the L were conspicuous on all the ornaments of the pediments and columns. On the right a tent formed of a French flag covered a refreshment *buffet;* another *buffet* on the left was placed under a tent made of Austrian flags. Immense *cafés,* distributed about the surrounding rooms, gave refreshment to the crowd of citizens who, on this occasion, made it their duty to drink to the health of the Imperial couple in Tokay. The Archduchess, who had never been to a ridotto in her life, walked through all the rooms on the arm of the Emperor. The air resounded with vivas; the crowd moved about with

an amount of enthusiasm and joy which it would be difficult to depict. This *fête*, Monseigneur, comprised every perfection that grandeur, riches, and good taste could offer; it was embellished by the bond of fraternity which seemed to be drawn closely between the two nations."

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The Prince de Neuchâtel continued to be the object of attentions such, perhaps, as had never been paid in Vienna to the envoy of any Sovereign. From morning till night the residence in which he had taken up his abode was surrounded by a crowd of sightseers impatient to see and greet the friend and companion-in-arms of the great Napoleon. He gave, on the 9th of March, a gala dinner to the most distinguished ladies and gentlemen of the city. "After dinner," wrote Count Otto to the Duke de Cadore, "other ladies came to visit him first, a distinction never before accorded to any foreign prince in this city. At the full-dress spectacle given the same evening, the Court was received with indescribable enthusiasm, and the Prince once more took precedence of the Archdukes. He was placed by the side of the Empress, who throughout the evening made the most flattering remarks to him. Among the unexampled honours that were paid to him, I could always easily distinguish those personal to himself. His Highness has had the greatest success here, especially among the Grand Dukes, who, to conquer the repugnance he displayed to take precedence over them, said to him in the most obliging manner, 'We are soldiers, and you are our senior.' The Archduke Charles especially has behaved with an amount of gracefulness and delicacy which has affected the Prince extremely. The Emperor has presented the Prince with his portrait in a costly

medallion. His Highness has been careful to wear it on several occasions."

Napoleon, only a few days previously so cordially hated by the Viennese, had become to them, as it were by some sudden enchantment, a species of divinity. Everywhere there were pæans, allegories, and cantatas in his honour. The poets of the city were never tired of celebrating the union of the myrtle and the laurel, grace and strength, beauty and genius. "Love," they said in their dithyrambs, "weaves the chains of flowers which will unite Austria and Gallia for ever. Shed tears, ye nations, but let them be tears of joy, tears of enthusiasm and gratitude. Long live Louise and long live Napoleon!" In every possible spot, in every street were to be seen devices, transparencies, flags, mythological emblems, temples of Hymen, angels of peace and concord, and Fame blowing her trumpet.

At that time there were still in Vienna a number of French officers and soldiers who had been compelled to remain there on account of wounds received by them in the recent war. All those who were not too ill to leave their beds were anxious to have the happiness of gazing on the features of their new Empress. They, therefore, presented themselves at the doors of the Palace. As soon as Marie Louise was informed of their presence, she went out to them and graciously spoke to them in the kindest possible

manner. Then these brave fellows, transported with joy, shouted with all the strength of their lungs, "Long live the Princess! Long live the House of Austria!" And the good Viennese, enchanted by such a sight, were lost in astonishment, and rejoiced to see the daughter of their Sovereign so warmly cheered by the French soldiers of Essling and Wagram.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MARRIAGE IN VIENNA.

Before narrating the ceremony of the marriage by procuration, which was celebrated on the 11th of March, 1810, in the Church of the Augustines, at Vienna, we will enumerate who were then the members of the Imperial family.

The Emperor Francis II., head of the house of Hapsburg Lorraine, was born on the 12th of February, 1768, and had therefore just entered on his forty-third year. He was consequently only a year and a half older than his son-in-law Napoleon, who was born on the 15th of August, 1769. The Sovereign of Austria had married, as his third wife, his cousin Marie Louise Beatrix d'Este, daughter of the deceased Archduke Ferdinand, Duke de Modena. This Princess, by whom her husband had no children, was born on the 14th of December, 1787, four years, almost day for day, before her step-daughter, the Archduchess

Marie Louise, wife of the Emperor Napoleon, who was born on the 11th of December, 1791. The new Empress of the French, at the date of the celebration of her marriage, in Vienna, was therefore eighteen years and three months old, being twenty-two years younger than her husband.

The Emperor Francis II. had eight children, three sons and five daughters, all the issue of his second marriage with the Princess Marie Thérèse of the Two Sicilies, and born in the following order :—

In 1791, Marie Louise.

In 1793, Ferdinand, Prince Imperial.

In 1797, Leopoldine, who became the wife of Don Pedro, Emperor of Brazil.

In 1798, Marie Clementine, who married the Prince de Salerne, and became the step-mother of the Duke d'Aumale, son of King Louis Philippe.

In 1801, Caroline, who married Prince Frédéric of Saxony.

In 1802, Francis Charles Joseph.

In 1804, Marie Anne, destined to become the Abbess of the Chapter of the Noble Ladies of Prague.

In 1805, Jean.

The Emperor Francis II. had a sister and eight brothers, born in the following order :—

In 1767, Marie Thérèse Josèphe, who married Antoine Clement, brother of King Frédéric Auguste of Saxony.

In 1769, Ferdinand, who after having been Grand Duke of Tuscany, became Grand Duke of Wurzburg, and for whom the Emperor of the French entertained a sincere friendship.

In 1771, Charles Louis, the celebrated Archduke Charles, the rival of Napoleon on the battle field.

In 1776, Joseph Antoine, Palatine of Hungary.

In 1779, Antoine Victor, who became Bishop of Bamberg.

In 1782, Jean, who in 1848 presided over the Parliament of Frankfort.

In 1783, Regnier, who was made Viceroy of the Lombardo-Venetian Kingdom when it became once more an Austrian province.

In 1784, Louis.

In 1788, Rodolphe, who became a Cardinal.

There were, therefore, at the time of the marriage of Marie Louise, eleven Archdukes—three sons and eight brothers of the Emperor.

The celebration of the marriage was preceded, on the 9th of March, 1810, by the ceremony called the renunciation. At one o'clock in the afternoon Marshal Berthier, Prince de Neuchâtel, Ambassador Extraordinary of France, betook himself to the Palace with all his suite in a State carriage drawn by six horses, and was conducted to the Privy Council room to be a witness to the ceremony. As soon as Francis II. and Marie Louise were seated beneath the canopy, the Emperor,

as head of the family, spoke as follows :—" Bearing in mind that the custom in vogue in the Imperial family demands that before their marriage the Imperial Princesses and Archduchesses shall recognise the Austrian pragmatic and the order of succession by a solemn act of renunciation, H.I.H. the Archduchess Marie Louise, betrothed to H.M. the Emperor of the French, King of Italy, is about to take the customary oath, and to make a solemn act of renunciation." The Archduchess then approached a table on which there were a crucifix between two lighted candles, and the Holy Gospels. The Count Hohenwart, Prince Archbishop of Vienna, opened the book of the Gospel of St. John, and the Archduchess, having placed on it two fingers of her right hand, read aloud the act of renunciation of the rights of succession to the crown, and took the oath. In the evening there was a grand opera at the theatre, and Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride* was performed. The staircase leading to the boxes was reached through a brilliantly illuminated orange-grove.

On the following day, Saturday, the 11th of March, the marriage was celebrated with great pomp in the Church of the Augustines. The procession set out through the rooms of the Palace, which were ornamented with hangings, chandeliers, and candelabra. Grenadiers were drawn up in a double line as far as the church. The procession was formed

in the following order: Two Harbingers of the Court, Pages, Seneschals of the Chamber, Officers of the Household, Chamberlains, Privy Councillors, Ministers, principal Officers of the Court, the Ambassador Extraordinary of France, the Archdukes Rodolphe, Louis, Regnier, Jean, Antoine, and Joseph, with the Archduke Charles at their head, accompanied by the Grand Master of the Court, the Emperor and King, followed by the Captain of the Hungarian *Garde Noble*, the Captain of the Halbert-bearers of the Body Guard, the Grand Chamberlain, and the Empress-Queen leading the bride by the hand. The train of the Empress's robe was borne by the Grand Mistresses of the Court as far as the second ante-chamber, by Pages as far as the church, and in the church again by the Grand Mistresses. To the right and left of the Emperor of Austria, the Empress, and the Grand Dukes, marched twelve archers and an equal number of the Body Guard, and at a certain distance, the same number of halbert-bearers. Drums and trumpets announced the arrival of the Emperor and Empress in the Church of the Augustines. The Prince Archbishop of Vienna went to meet them, accompanied by his clergy, and presented to them the holy water. He then proceeded with the Bishops to the foot of the altar on the side of the reading desk. The Imperial family took their places in the choir. The Archduke Charles, representing the Emperor Napoleon, and the Archduchess

Marie Louise knelt on the *prie-Dieu* in front of the grand altar. The Archbishop having blessed the wedding ring, which was presented to him in a cup, the Archduke Charles and the bride advanced towards the altar, where the marriage was solemnised in the German language according to the Viennese rite. After the exchange of rings, the bride took that which was destined for the Emperor Napoleon and which it was her duty to present to her husband. A *Te Deum* was then sung, all present kneeling. Six pages bore flaming torches. Salvoes of artillery thundered, and all the bells of the city informed the population that the marriage was accomplished. After the *Te Deum* the Archbishop of Vienna gave the benediction. The procession then returned to the Palace in the same order as before.

The Ambassador of France wrote to the Duke de Cadore:—"The marriage of H.M. the Emperor with the Archduchess Marie Louise has been celebrated with unsurpassable magnificence, to which the preceding *fêtes* bore no comparison. The crowd of spectators from all parts of the Monarchy and abroad filled the church, and lobbies, and rooms of the Palace to such an extent that the Emperor of Austria, as well as the Empress, was put to inconvenience several times. The truly prodigious quantity of diamonds and pearls, the richness of the costumes and uniforms, the innumerable quantity of lustres which illuminated all parts of the

Castle, and the joy of those present imparted to the *fête* a brilliancy worthy of the great and majestic solemnity. The wealthiest nobles of the Monarchy displayed, to their fullest extent, all the splendours of their houses, and seemed to vie with the Sovereign himself. The ladies in attendance on the two Empresses, the majority of whom were Princesses and ladies of the highest rank, appeared to be fatigued under the weight of the diamonds and pearls which covered them. But every eye, Monseigneur, was fixed on the principal object of the *fête*, on that adored Princess who will soon make the happiness of our Sovereign."

When the procession returned to the Palace the Imperial family and the Court met in the room called the Mirror Chamber. The Emperor of Austria and the two Empresses were congratulated by all the nobility. Marie Louise had at her side the Grand Mistress of her household and twelve ladies of the Palace.

"Her modesty," adds Count Otto in the same report, "the nobility of her bearing, and the ease with which she replied to the speeches made to her, enchanted everybody. I was the first to be given audience. In reply to my congratulations she said that she would use every endeavour to please H.M. the Emperor Napoleon and to contribute to the happiness of the French nation, which, from that moment,

had become her own. Her Majesty then received all the nobility of the Court, and spoke to them with an amount of graciousness that charmed them. When these audiences were over I was presented to the Emperor, who conversed with me in the most amiable and cordial manner. He said that, in spite of the indifferent state of his health, he had been unwilling to neglect a single opportunity of testifying his high esteem for the Emperor, my master. 'He will always find in me,' he continued, 'the loyalty and cordiality which you may have noticed in these recent negotiations. I give your master my beloved daughter. She deserves to be happy. See, too, the joy depicted on every face. We have neglected nothing to show the satisfaction which this alliance gives us. Our people have need of repose; they applaud the step we have taken. I am sure that between us the best intelligence will reign, and that our bonds of union will be drawn closer and closer together.' Every obliging word that the Emperor uttered on this occasion was rendered more so by the tone of his voice and his accompanying smile. There is, indeed, in the manner of this Monarch a certain affection which accounts for the great popularity he enjoys. During and after the ceremony the Empress always placed her step-daughter on her right, leading her by the hand in the church, and through the lobbies and rooms. The immense and almost inconvenient crowd which

thronged the interior and every approach seemed to belong to the Imperial family, so great was the emotion displayed by them when they saw the new Empress pass by. All the Frenchmen near me declared that they had never seen so grand or so touching a sight. The Court has had a large number of medals struck as a memento of this event. Several hundreds have been sent to the Prince de Neuchâtel, who, to the last moment, has been treated with the highest distinction."

After the marriage and the congratulations which succeeded it there was a grand State dinner at the Palace. A splendid table had been laid on a platform covered with rich hangings and with a dais in the form of a horse shoe. The Grand Master of the Court announced to their Majesties that they were served. Carvers and pages bore the dishes. After the *Lavabo*, the *Benedicite* was said by the Archbishop, and the Imperial family sat down to table in the following order:—In the centre the Empress of the French, on her right the Emperor of Austria, on her left the Empress, on either side the Archdukes Charles, Joseph, Antoine, Jean, Regnier, Louis, and Rodolphe; then the Prince de Neuchâtel, Ambassador Extraordinary of France. The Grand Master of the Court took his place on the right behind the Emperor's chair; near him was the Captain of the Halberdiers, and on the left the Captain of the Hungarian *Garde Noble*. The Ministers of

State and those of foreign Courts on the right, and the two Grand Mistresses of the Court and the ladies on the left were placed below the dais. The rest of the procession faced the table immediately behind the Body Guard. The Archdukes and Archduchesses, children of the Emperor, were spectators of the repast from a gallery set apart for them. During dinner there was a vocal and instrumental concert. Afterwards the Bishop said grace in a low voice.

The presence of the Prince de Neuchâtel at the Imperial table, where he remained from the beginning to the end of dinner, was much remarked upon. It was a departure from the ceremonial of the Court of Vienna, which only admits Ambassadors to the table of the Sovereign on very rare occasions, such as the marriage of an Archduchess; but even then requires them to leave the table before dessert and to mix in the crowd of nobles admitted to the banqueting hall. Neither was it forgotten, in regard to this, that at the marriage of the Dauphin of France with the Archduchess Marie Antoinette, the Marquis de Durfort, Ambassador of King Louis XV., was not invited to the banquet, although there was no question of precedence between the Ambassador and Duke Albert de Saxe-Teschen, who was present at the repast. This same Duke Albert de Saxe-Teschen, as well as the brothers of the young Emperor of the French, abstained from taking part in the State dinner of the 11th of March, 1810. The reason given for this was

the desire to accord particular distinction to the Ambassador Extraordinary of the Emperor Napoleon.

On the same day the Archduke Charles, who had at the marriage represented the person of the French Sovereign, wrote him the following letter: "March 11, 1810. Sire,—The functions which your Majesty has been good enough to delegate to me have been infinitely agreeable to me. Flattered by representing a Sovereign who, by his exploits, will live for ever in the annals of history, and convinced of the reciprocal happiness which must result from the union of your Imperial Majesty with a Princess endowed with so many good qualities as my dear niece, I felt happy in being called upon to cement this bond. I beg your Imperial Majesty to accept my assurances of sincerity, as well as those of the high consideration with which I shall never cease to be, Sire, your Imperial Majesty's very humble and very obedient servant and cousin, CHARLES." (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

In the evening free performances were given in every theatre. The Emperor and Empress drove in a carriage through the city with the bride, who during the day had sent a golden Napoleon to each wounded Frenchman, and five to each of those who had lost a limb. The same thing was done to the wounded and amputated German troops who were allies of France in the recent war. This mark of generosity produced the most favourable impression, and much

good-will was testified to the new Empress for having thought in her triumph of the suffering soldiers. She was cheered everywhere. The city and the suburbs vied with each other in the matter of illuminations. In front of the Chancellery, where the Prince de Neuchâtel was staying, were to be seen the initials of Napoleon and Marie Louise, surrounded by rays. On the window was the following device: *Ex unione pax, opes, tranquillitas populorum.* The Office of the Crown Buildings represented a temple with this inscription in a transparency: *Vota publica fausto hymeneo.*

The famous mechanician Melzel had conceived an ingenious decoration. Above a portrait, very like the new Empress, there appeared a rainbow. By its side was the master-piece of the mechanician, an automaton whom the Viennese designated as the Warlike Trumpeter. But a genius imposed silence on him by showing him this inscription: *Tace, mundus concors.* "Be silent, the world is at peace."

There might have been a few satirical, or abusive placards stealthily displayed, but the police had taken care to remove them. Unfortunately the weather was sadly against the illuminations, and scarcely one out of every ten lamps remained lighted. Was not that as it were a presage of the enthusiasm of the Viennese for Napoleon, an enthusiasm which had, as if by magic, succeeded to hatred, and which, after having been so quickly lighted, was about to be extinguished so rapidly?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DEPARTURE.

Marie Louise had only one more day to spend in Vienna. The marriage by procuration had taken place on the 11th of March, 1810, and on the 13th the new Empress of the French was to leave the capital of Austria to wend her way to France to be by the side of her husband. After so many *fêtes* and so much excitement, the 12th was consecrated to repose and recovery. The Emperor Francis took advantage of it to write this letter to the Emperor Napoleon: "March 12, 1810. My brother and very dear son-in-law,—I charge my Chamberlain, the Count de Clary, to hand to your Imperial Majesty this letter. The great covenant which binds our two thrones for ever was consummated yesterday. I wish to be the first to congratulate your Majesty on an event which you have desired, which my wishes in conformity with yours, my brother, have crowned, and which I look

upon as the most precious and, at the same time, the surest pledge of our reciprocal happiness and, consequently, of that of our people. If the sacrifice I have made in separating myself from my daughter is immense, if at this moment my heart is bleeding from the loss of that dear child, the idea and, I do not hesitate to say it, the most thorough conviction of her happiness alone can console me. The Count de Metternich, who will follow the Count de Clary in a few days, will be charged to express in words to your Imperial Majesty the attachment I have vowed to the Prince who, from yesterday, has become one of the most precious members of my family. I content myself now with begging you to receive the assurances of my esteem and my unalterable friendship. Your Imperial and Royal Majesty's good brother and brother-in-law, FRANCIS." (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

On the 12th of March Marshal Berthier, Prince de Neuchâtel, left Vienna for Braunau, on the Austro-Bavarian frontier. He was there to meet the Empress of the French, who was about to be escorted there by the Austrian mission, to be handed over to the French mission, with whom she would continue her journey. "Before the departure of the Prince de Neuchâtel," wrote Count Otto, "several of the Archdukes, as well as the Grand Officers of the Crown, visited him. His Highness left at two o'clock

amid the acclamations of an immense crowd. Never had any Ambassador a better reception, nor was any Embassy ever fulfilled with greater dignity and nobility. The Prince distributed more than 60,000 francs in the house which was furnished for him. In every step he took he comported himself admirably, and in spite of the honours of all kinds which were showered upon him, I do not think that there is a single individual at Court whose self-love can possibly have been wounded." (Despatch of the 10th of March, 1810, addressed to the Duke de Cadore.)

As the moment approached for her to leave a family and country that she loved, to throw herself into the unknown, the young Empress felt her emotion increase. German and Austrian at heart, she could not reconcile herself to the idea that perhaps she would never again see her father for whom she felt so much veneration and tenderness, the family in which she was so dearly loved, the good Viennese, who had always taken such a lively interest in her, the Palaces of Burg and Schönbrunn, where she had spent the happy years of her infancy, and the dear Church of the Augustines where she had so often prayed from the bottom of her heart. Could all the eulogies which had been heaped upon Napoleon for a few days efface the recollection of the evil that had so often been spoken of him? She was promised riches, grandeur, and power; but is all this happiness?

The 13th of March arrived. The hour of departure had struck. The French Ambassador wrote on the same day: "Her Majesty the Empress of the French left this morning with a numerous suite. On leaving a beloved family and a country she will never see again the Princess experienced for the first time all the anguish of so cruel a separation. As early as eight o'clock in the morning the whole Court had assembled in the audience rooms. Towards nine o'clock the Empress of Austria was seen to appear still leading her august step-daughter by the right hand. She made an effort to speak to me, but sobs impeded her utterance. The young Empress was accompanied by her step-mother and the Archdukes as far as her carriage, where they embraced for the last time. Here the strength of the affectionate mother gave way. Almost fainting she was led back to her rooms by the Chamberlain. The young Empress burst into tears, and her distress communicated itself even to the foreigners present."

The procession moved off in the following order: A division of cuirassiers, a squadron of yeomanry, three postillions, the Prince de Paar, Director of Communications, in a carriage drawn by six horses; four carriages, each also drawn by six horses, in which were Count Edelinck, Grand Master of the Court, and the Chamberlains, Counts Eugène de Haugwitz, Dominique de Wrbna, Joseph Metternich, landgrave of

Fürstenberg, Counts Ernest de Hoyos and Felix de Mier, Count de Haddick, Field-Marshal Count de Wurmbrand, Count François Zichy, Prince Zinzendor, Prince Paul Esterhazy, and Count An toine Bathyany; then, the Prince de Trautmannsdorf, first Grand Master of the Court and Commissary for the handing over, in a carriage drawn by six horses; then, in a carriage drawn by eight horses, the Empress of the French, having with her the Countess de Lazansky, Grand Mistress of the Household; and lastly, in three carriages each drawn by six horses, the ladies of the Palace, the Princess de Trautmannsdorf, and Countesses O'Donnell, de Sauran, d'Appony, de Blumeyen, de Trann, de Podstalzky, de Kaunitz, de Hunyady, de Chotek, de Palfy, and de Zichy. A detachment of cavalry closed the procession, which slowly crossed the Places Saint Michel, le Colmarck, and le Graben, the Rue de Carinthie, and the Glacis and Rue de Mariahiff. The troops and yeomanry were formed up in double line.

"The Empress," said Count Otto in his despatch of the 13th of March, "to the sound of cannon and the ringing of bells proceeded along the principal streets of the city and suburbs, followed by a countless multitude who showered blessings and tender farewells upon her. The people had decked the houses and even the gateway of the castle with tricolor ribbons. The bands of the regiments played French marches for the first

time. A general salute from the ramparts at last announced that the Empress had crossed the bridge. Her Majesty will be received with similar marks of distinction in all the Austrian towns through which she passes. The *cortége*, consisting of eighty-three vehicles, will be materially delayed by the bad roads and the heavy rain which fell last night."

The Ambassador concludes his despatch thus : " The boisterous rejoicing which has prevailed in Vienna during the past week, in which Her Majesty has fully shared, has been momentarily troubled by a feeling which does honour to her excellent heart, and ought to endear her to us still more. She has a profound affection for her parents, and the feeling is mutual. They have given her here the name of Louise the Pious. They say that it is right that she should share the throne of St. Louis. The Emperor started an hour before Her Majesty for Lintz, where he will embrace his dearly loved child for the last time. It has been the general remark during the last few days that the solicitude of the father has had a larger share in everything that he has done than the foresight of the Sovereign. The kindly disposition of the Monarch has developed on this occasion in the most advantageous manner, and everything forecasts the happiest results from the alliance which has just been concluded."

Marie Louise, when she left Vienna, undoubtedly

thought that she would never see it again. Nevertheless she was destined to return there very quickly, and her return was to bear very little resemblance to her departure. The Viennese were to see her again in four years. But under what different circumstances! How cruelly did results disappoint the hopes of peace and happiness to which her marriage gave rise! What an awakening after so sweet a dream! How quickly was the rainbow destined to disappear from the sky, and how soon was the too sudden bliss to give way to clouds and storms! The hatred of the Austrians for Napoleon, so admired by them during the year 1810, was to revive as bitterly as in the days of Austerlitz and Wagram. They would no longer cheer Marie Louise. They would content themselves with blaming her. Her father himself would no longer regard her as a Sovereign. "As my daughter," he will say to her, "all I have is yours, even my blood and my life; as a Sovereign I do not know you." The time will appear to be long past when she took precedence over the Empress of Austria; and when her father, the head of the Hapsburg family, respectfully gave her the right hand. Having lost her double imperial and royal crown—the crown of France and the crown of Italy—she will be compelled to beg from an implacable coalition a small duchy, possession of which, however, was promised to her by a treaty signed after the fall of the great Empire. There will be *fêtes* again in Vienna, but they

will not be for her, the dethroned Sovereign. One day her curiosity will lead her to see one, but it will be in secret, behind a curtain. On the evening of a State Ball given by her father in honour of the members of the Congress of Vienna she will hide herself near an opening made in the attic of the great drawing-room of the Palace—the same room where in honour of her marriage such magnificent *fêtes* had been celebrated—and from that spot the wife of the prisoner of the Island of Elba will witness the dancing of the men who condemned her to be the living widow of her husband.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HANDING OVER.

The journey of Marie Louise was an ovation. In all the towns and villages through which she passed the young Empress received the homage of the authorities. Groups of young girls dressed in white presented flowers to her. The bells rang. The enthusiasm of the rural population was no less pronounced than that of the Viennese. Marie Louise slept at Saint Polten, where she found her father who, travelling *incog.*, had come to embrace her for the last time. The Empress, the step-mother of the bride, also went there unexpectedly, and threw herself for the last time into the arms of the Sovereign of the French. Marie Louise arrived at Ried on the 15th of March, 1810, and left on the 16th, at eight a.m., after having heard mass. At eleven a.m., she was at Altheim, quite close to the Bavarian frontier. In that locality she halted for the purpose of changing her travelling dress and putting

on State costume. Bavaria, as part of the Confederation of the Rhine, might be regarded as annexed to the French Empire, Napoleon being the protector of the Confederation. It had consequently been decided that the ceremony of handing over should take place on the Austro-Bavarian frontier, quite close to the little town of Braunau. Here the Empress of the French was to be formally handed over by the Austrian commission to the French commission charged to conduct her to France. It was a repetition of what had taken place forty years previously, on the occasion of the marriage of Marie Antoinette. Exactly on the frontier of Austria and Bavaria three pavilions, joined one to the other, had been constructed, the first of which was looked upon as Austria, the second —in the centre—neutral, and the third as French. These three contiguous pavilions formed a wooden building, divided into three compartments, and situated between Altheim and Braunau. It had been carefully furnished, and stoves had been placed in it. The centre pavilion or room, intended for the ceremony, was ornamented with a dais on which an armchair, covered with cloth of gold, was placed for the Empress. On the left of the dais, and entering from the Braunau side (the Bavarian side) had been placed, for the use of the plenipotentiaries, a large table with a velvet cloth. Two avenues planted with young green trees led, one to the French, and the other to

the Austrian pavilion. On the side of the former (the Bavarian side) were drawn up, under the command of Generals Friant and Pajol, three French regiments, two of infantry and one of cavalry, in full dress. On the other side, that of the Austrian pavilion (the Altheim side), there were neither troops nor functionaries, the momentary neutrality of the territory being thus evidenced. The French Commissary and Secretary for the handing over were Marshal Berthier, Prince de Neuchâtel, and Count Alexander de Laborde. The Austrian Commissary and Secretary were the Prince de Trautmannsdorf and M. Hudelitz. The French Commission, sent from Paris to meet Marshal Berthier at Braunau, to be present at the ceremony of handing over, and to serve afterwards as escort to the Empress, was composed of the following persons :—

Caroline, Queen of Naples, wife of Murat, and sister of Napoleon.

The Duchess de Montebello, Lady of Honour, widow of Marshal Lannes.

The Countess de Luçay, Lady of the Bedchamber.

The Duchess de Bassano, and the Countesses de Montmorency, de Mortemart, and de Bouillé, Ladies of the Palace.

Monseigneur Jauffret, Bishop of Metz, Almoner.

The Count de Beauharnais, Lord in Waiting.

Prince Aldobrandini Borghèse, First Equerry.

The Counts d'Aubusson, de Béarn, d'Angosse, and de Barol, Chamberlains.

Pursuivant of the Palace, Philippe de Ségur.

Barons de Saluces and d'Audenarde, Equerries.

The Count de Seyssel, Master of the Ceremonies.

M. de Bausset, Prefect of the Palace.

At half-past one on the 16th of March, the Prince de Neuchâtel and the persons forming part of the mission, presented themselves in the French pavilion, where the handing over was to take place, the gentlemen in full, and the ladies in Court dress. Towards two o'clock the Empress Marie Louise arrived in the Austrian Pavilion. After having rested for a moment she was conducted by the Austrian Master of the Ceremonies into the centre, or neutral pavilion, where the throne was, and where the ceremony of handing over was to be solemnized. Marie Louise seated herself on the throne. The Prince de Trautmannsdorf placed himself before the table where the act was to be signed. He had behind him the Aulic Councillor Hudelitz, secretary for the handing over. The lords and ladies of the Austrian Commission ranged themselves round the Empress. The end and two sides of the room were occupied by twelve of the Hungarian *Garde Noble*, and twelve German Guards under arms and in full uniform.

While the Austrian Commission was thus grouping itself, the French Commission was waiting in the

adjoining room, and betraying great impatience to behold the countenance of their new Sovereign. M. de Bausset, who was present at the ceremony, tells us in his memoirs:—"Impatience, easy to explain, made me desirous of getting a glimpse of the Empress as soon as she arrived and had entered the centre pavilion to take her place on the throne and give her Court time to range themselves round her before our introduction. I had brought with me a gimlet, with which I had bored several holes in the door of our room. This little indiscretion, which was not mentioned in the minutes of the proceedings, gave us the pleasure of contemplating at our ease the features of our young and new Sovereign. I need not say that our ladies were the most eager to make use of the little openings I had contrived." The impression produced by the gracious and majestic aspect of the Empress on the inquisitive males and females who thus looked at her, was excellent. "Marie Louise," adds M. de Bausset, "was standing upright before the throne. Her tall figure was perfect. Her hair was fair and beautiful. Her blue eyes bespoke all the candour and innocence of her soul. Her whole countenance was redolent of freshness and goodness. She wore a robe of gold brocade, figured with large flowers in natural colours, which from its weight must have fatigued her excessively. She had suspended from her neck a portrait of Napoleon enriched with sixteen magnificent diamonds which cost altogether 500,000 francs."

The Baron de Lohr, Austrian Master of the Ceremonies, having knocked at the door of the adjoining room, where were the Prince de Neuchâtel and the French Court of the Sovereign, informed Count Seyssel, French Master of the Ceremonies, that the ceremony could begin. The latter then conducted into the neutral pavilion the Prince de Neuchâtel, who entered followed by Count de Laborde, secretary for the handing over. After them there came the Duchess de Montebello, Count de Beauharnais, and the other persons composing the French Commission, who took their places at the end of the room opposite the Austrian Commission. The two Commissioners for the handing over—the Prince de Neuchâtel and Prince de Trautmannsdorf—exchanged compliments. Then the acts of handing over and reception were exchanged. The Commissioners signed both documents, and affixed thereto the seals of their arms; after which they exchanged them. Then Prince de Trautmannsdorf advanced bowing to the Empress, and asked permission to kiss her hand on taking leave of her. The Sovereign accorded this permission to him, as well as to all the ladies and gentlemen who had accompanied her since her departure from Vienna. While the two secretaries for the handing over, the French and the Austrian, counted the *dot* (500,000 francs in new golden ducats), and recorded the precious stones and jewellery of the Empress—the French Commissioner giving a receipt for the whole in accordance with an inventory

which was annexed to the receipt—the Austrian Commission defiled before the throne of Marie Louise. Each one, according to his rank, approached the Sovereign, and kissed her hand with deep emotion. Even all the servants of the lowest rank were admitted to lay at her feet the homage of their respect and their good wishes. "The eyes of her Majesty were wet with tears," M. de Bausset tells us, "and her emotion won her all hearts."

When all the members of the Austrian Commission had resumed their places, after the defile had taken place, Prince Trautmannsdorf offered his hand to the Empress to assist her in descending from the dais, and to conduct her to the Prince de Neuchâtel, who then took the hand of the Sovereign and led her towards the French Court. To the Empress he named each person who composed her Court. Then the door of the French pavilion opened; the Queen of Naples, who had remained there during the ceremony of the handing over, came forward, and the two-sisters-in-law, after having embraced, conversed together for a few moments. The next personage to be announced was the Archduke Antoine, whom the Emperor of Austria had sent to greet the Queen of Naples, sister of Napoleon, and who was under orders to return at once to Vienna to bring thither news of the Empress Marie Louise. After the Queen had received and thanked the Archduke the two sisters-in-law got into

their carriage and, followed by the Prince de Neuchâtel and the French Court, drove to the town of Braunau. On both sides of the route troops were ranged in order of battle, and salvoes of artillery resounded on all sides.

The Prince de Neuchâtel invited, on behalf of the Emperor Napoleon, the ladies and gentlemen of the Austrian Commission to spend the day at Braunau and witness the rejoicings which were to take place in that town. A similar invitation was issued on behalf of the Empress Marie Louise. General de Ségur, who was present at these festivities, wrote:—"The only reminiscence I have is that the men of both Courts met and indulged in the usual style of conversation; but I never saw a circle of women in a more constrained attitude, or any meeting so devoid of sympathy, as was conspicuous by reason of the cold reserve and the haughty silence of these Austrian ladies. These ladies, compelled in their turn to pay in their sex, in the person of the Princess sacrificed to our good fortune, the cost of the war, disavowed as far as they could the submission with which their Government associated them. They handed over to us their last sign of defeat with an ill grace which their husbands, tired of war, did not display." Generals Friant and Pajol gave a grand dinner to the Austrian officers in the Citadel of Braunau, which was remarkable for the mutual courtesy displayed by the guests.

Three toasts were drunk—the Emperor of the French, the Empress Marie Louise, and the Emperor of Austria. After each toast a salute of twenty guns was fired.

At Braunau the Empress resided in a house facing the Hôtel de Ville, which belonged to a rich wine merchant. A triumphal arch was erected at the tastefully decorated entrance to this house. Marie Louise rested there, and changed her clothes from head to foot according to the custom which exacts from a foreign Princess, when handed over to her new country, a transformation so complete that around her, as well as upon her, there shall be nothing remaining that can bind her to the country, the persons, or the customs from which she has been withdrawn. The tradesmen and workpeople of Paris had been working by measures and on models sent from Vienna. Napoleon had all these models shown to him. Taking one of the shoes, which were remarkably small, and giving his valet, by way of caress, a slap on the cheek with it, he said, "See, Constant, a shoe of good augury. Have you seen many feet like that?"

The Empress, after having received the authorities of the town of Braunau, as well as the Generals who commanded the French troops, retired and addressed the following letter, so touching in its simplicity, to her father. M. de Helfert has published the German text of it, and the following is an exact translation:—

"Dear Father, forgive me for not having written to you yesterday as was my duty; I was prevented by my journey, which was long and tiring. I gladly take advantage of Prince de Trautmannsdorf to assure you that my constant thoughts are for you. God has given me strength to bear the cruel emotion of this separation from all who belong to me. In Him I have put my trust. He will sustain me, and will give me courage to accomplish my mission. My consolation will be in the thought of a sacrifice made for you. I arrived very late yesterday at Ried, upset by the reflection that I was perhaps separated from you for ever. Yesterday at two o'clock I arrived at the French camp of Braunau. I staid for a few moments in the Austrian barracks, and then I had to hear the acts read on the neutral ground where a throne had been erected. All my people came to kiss my hand, and at that moment I could scarcely restrain my emotion. An icy shudder passed over me, and I was so overcome that the tears came to the eyes of the Prince de Neuchâtel. Prince de Trautmannsdorf handed me over to him, and the members of my household were presented to me. Ah, God! what a difference between the French and the Austrian ladies! The Queen of Naples came to meet me, took me in her arms, and showed me wonderful tenderness; but nevertheless I do not trust it, and I do not think that the desire of being useful to me was the sole reason of

her journey. She came with me to Braunau, and there I had to undergo a toilette which lasted for two hours. I assure you that I am already quite as much perfumed as the other Frenchwomen. The Emperor Napoleon has sent me a superb toilette set in gold. He has not yet written to me. Since I must leave you I would rather be with him than travel with all these ladies. Ah, God! how I regret the happy moments spent near you! Now only do I appreciate them. I assure you, dear papa, I am sad and inconsolable. I hope your cold has passed away. Every day I pray for you. Pardon my scrawl. I have so little time. I kiss your hands a thousand times, and I have the honour to be, dear papa, your obedient and humble daughter, MARIE LOUISE. Braunau, March 16th, 1810."

In the evening the Empress showed herself once more to those who had accompanied her from Vienna and took a final farewell of them: "Among these persons," we read in the Memoirs of Madame Durand, first lady of the new Empress, "there were several who had known Marie Antoinette. All of them expressed the sorrow which Marie Louise must experience in going to take her seat on a throne where her grandmother had met with such misfortune. At the moment when she got into the carriage which was to take her to Munich, the Grand Master of her household, an old man 65 years of age, who had ac-

companied her so far, raised his folded hands to heaven, as if to implore its favour for his young mistress, and gave her his blessing as a father would have done. His eyes betrayed a soul full of great thoughts and bitter memories. His tears wrung others from all those who witnessed this touching scene."

The Empress, accompanied by all the French Commission, left Braunau for Munich in dreadful weather at an early hour on the 17th of March. She had only retained one of her Austrian suite, her Grand Mistress, Countess Lazansky. She hoped that this lady, for whom she entertained a very strong affection, would remain a year longer with her. But this hope, this illusion, was destined to be very speedily dispelled.

CHAPTER X.

THE JOURNEY.

On the 17th of March the Empress arrived at Haag, where the Prince Royal of Bavaria received her. At ten o'clock in the evening she was at Munich. On the following day M. de Boyne, the French *Chargé d'Affaires*, wrote to the Duke de Cadore: "H.M. the Empress has received all along the route, and yesterday on her entry into Munich, the most expressive marks of respect and love. This capital was illuminated with a taste and magnificence quite eclipsing everything that has ever been seen here. The Prince Royal went as far as Haag to meet and congratulate Her Majesty. The troops and militia were under arms, and the King and Queen, followed by the entire Court, went to receive her at the foot of the State staircase." (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

Marie Louise did not leave Munich until the 19th of March. During the 18th she received a letter from her husband, which was brought to her by one of the

equerries of the Empress, Baron de Saint Aignan. In the evening there had been a State dinner, reception, and theatrical representation. On the following day, the 19th, the Empress was to suffer considerable annoyance. She had brought with her from Vienna to Braunau, and from Braunau to Munich, her Grand Mistress, her friend, her confidante, the woman who had with indefatigable zeal cared for her infancy and youth, the Countess Lazansky. At the date of her arrival in the capital of Bavaria, she was still persuaded that this lady would not leave her. Seeing that the Countess had not left her at Braunau, everything pointed to the belief that she would make the journey as far as Paris, and Marie Louise looked forward to having her with her for at least a year more. The Austrian Court shared this belief, and the French Ambassador had written on the 6th of March to the Duke de Cadore: "I will not any further, even indirectly, oppose the journey of Madame Lazansky, seeing that his Majesty is pleased to permit her to accompany the Empress. This mark of attention will be greatly appreciated." But this did not enter into the calculations of the sister of Napoleon, the Queen of Naples, who was put in the shade by the Austrian Grand Mistress, and who would have liked to have exercised undivided influence over the mind of the new Empress.

The Queen of Naples was a very agreeable and very fascinating woman. But in spite of Count Otto having

written that the Court of Austria had shown itself flattered on learning that Napoleon had selected his sister Caroline to meet the new Empress, the choice was perhaps not a very happy one, and the Emperor would undoubtedly have done better to have sent another Princess of his family. Could it, in fact, have been forgotten that there was another lady, also a Queen, and also called Caroline, who was the grandmother of Marie Louise, of whom Marie Louise was very fond, and whose throne was occupied by the wife of Murat? It might have been remembered that in the eyes of the Court of Vienna, the legitimate and real Sovereign of the Two Sicilies was not Caroline, the sister of Napoleon, but the other Caroline, the daughter of the great Marie Thérèse, the sister of Marie Antoinette.

We will let the widow of General Durand, first lady of the Empress, speak. She says in her interesting Memoirs: "The Princess Caroline, Madame Murat, then Queen of Naples, came to Braunau to receive her sister-in-law. The Duchess of Montebello, lovely, wise, the mother of five children, who had lost her husband in the last war, had been appointed Lady of Honour, a feeble recompense which the Emperor had thought it his duty to make her for the loss of a husband. The Countess de Luçay, sweet, good, and possessing the tone and manner of the great world in all its refinement, was Lady of the Bedchamber. I

will speak later on of the Ladies of the Palace, because their duties, entirely dependent on etiquette, rarely brought them in contact with the person of the Empress; each of them had pretensions which were wounded by the presence of Madame Lazansky. Their complaints on this score to Queen Caroline decided her to commit an act of despotism which wounded her sister-in-law deeply." This act was the dismissal of the Austrian Grand Mistress. In acting thus the Queen of Naples thought she would increase her credit with the Empress. On the contrary, she decreased it in a sensible degree.

"Madame Murat," adds Madame Durand, "was ambitious of obtaining great influence over Marie Louise, and had her conduct been more skilful, it is possible that she might have gained her end. M. de Talleyrand used to say of her that she had the head of Cromwell on the body of a pretty woman. Born with a lofty disposition, a strong head, large ideas, a supple and acute mind, grace, amiability, and fascination beyond description, she only needed to conceal her love of power, and when she did not gain her ends it was only because she wished to gain them too soon. From the first moment that she set eyes on the Austrian Princess she thought she had divined her character, and she was completely mistaken. She took her timidity for weakness, her embarrassment for awkwardness; she thought she had only to command, and she

shut against herself for ever the heart of her whom she assumed to rule."

Madame Durand thus records the petty conspiracy of the ladies: "The presence of the Countess Lazansky had excited the jealousy and fears of nearly all the ladies of the household of the Empress. They intrigued, they caballed, they told the Queen of Naples that she would never gain either the confidence or the affection of her sister-in-law as long as the latter kept in attendance on her a person who enjoyed an influence acquired by many years of care and friendship. The Lady of Honour complained that her duties would be reduced to nothing at all if the Princess kept near her a stranger who would take the place of everybody. In the end they induced the Queen to request Marie Louise to send away her Grand Mistress, although the promise had been made that she should be allowed to remain near her for almost a year."

The Empress might have resisted. The order of the Emperor was not shown to her. She was simply told that the presence of an Austrian Grand Mistress by the side of a French Sovereign was an anomaly, a thing contrary to all rules of etiquette, and that the best means for the Empress to adopt by way of being agreeable to the Emperor was spontaneously to make an indispensable sacrifice. Marie Louise yielded in order to be at peace with her surroundings, and she abandoned her friend, just as, later on, she would

abandon her husband, through weakness. The resolution she came to was no less painful to her, and she did not see the Countess de Lazansky leave without anguish at heart. "How painful this separation is to me!" she wrote to her father. "I could not really make a greater sacrifice for my husband, and yet I do not think that this sacrifice was in his mind."

What added still more to the annoyance of the young Empress was that she was compelled to separate from a little dog she loved dearly, which the Countess had to take back to Vienna with her. Marie Louise was told that Napoleon did not like dogs; that he could not endure those which Josephine had, and that they became a subject of dissension. Besides, on her arrival in France, was it not her duty to leave behind her everything belonging to her former country? General de Ségur, who formed part of the escort of the Empress from Braunau, does not allude to the Countess Lazansky, but he speaks of the dog: "The entire change of dress was only an amusement," he says, "that of persons was foreseen, and there was nothing for it but resignation. The painful transitions would have finally passed off without any excessive show of regret, had not the over-jealous care of the sister of Napoleon extended to a Viennese dog, whose dismissal, inexorably demanded, cost Marie Louise many tears." The acquisition of a colossal

Empire did not console the Sovereign for the loss of a little dog.

On the morning of the 19th of March Marie Louise and the Countess Lazansky parted. "The worst feature in the conduct of the Queen of Naples," says Madame Durand, who did not love that Princess, "was that after having exacted from the Empress her consent to the departure of Madame Lazansky, she gave orders to the ladies of the household to prevent that lady from entering the Empress's room if she presented herself to take farewell of her. This order was not carried out; the two ladies allowed the Grand Mistress to enter by a secret door; she spent two hours with her pupil, and notwithstanding the reproaches which that conduct drew upon her on the part of the Queen, she never repented of it."

While the Empress, who left Munich on the 19th of March, continued her journey to France, her former Grand Mistress bent her steps towards Vienna, where she arrived on the 22nd of March. This unexpected return produced an unfavourable impression on all classes of society.

On the 27th of March all the preparations were completed. Horses, carriages, escort, pavilion, all were ready. In the morning Prince Charles de Schwarzenberg, the Austrian Ambassador, and the Countess de Metternich, the wife of the Minister, arrived at the Castle of Compiègne from Vitry le François,

where they had seen the Empress, and of whom they were able to bring news to Napoleon. At noon the Emperor received a letter in which Marie Louise announced to him that hastening her journey, she was leaving Vitry le François that morning for Soissons. When this letter reached him Napoleon was walking up and down in the park as if to get rid of the weariness of a waiting which seemed to him to be interminable. On hearing that his young wife was so near him he could no longer moderate his impatience. He suddenly resolved to put aside the etiquette so laboriously prepared for the following day, and to go to meet Marie Louise. He summoned Murat, the only companion he wished to have in this step, and secretly leaving the park by a private door he, with his brother-in-law, got into a modest carriage without any armorial bearings, and driven by a servant not in livery. The carriage took the road to Soissons. The horses went at full speed.

Never had time seemed so long to the impatient Emperor. A double feeling, curiosity and love, made his heart beat like the heart of a youth of twenty. When he had passed Soissons he calculated that Marie Louise could not be much farther on, and he got out of the carriage at a village called Courcelles.

On her side the Empress, having her sister-in-law, Queen Caroline, with her in the carriage, and having no idea of what was going on, had been travelling

since morning. She had passed Châlons and Rheims, and intended dining at Soissons, where she imagined she was going to sleep, her meeting with the Emperor having been arranged to take place on the following day, the 28th of March, in the pavilion erected for the purpose a couple of leagues beyond that town. Courcelles was the last relay before Soissons. It was raining in torrents when Napoleon arrived there, and getting out of the carriage with his brother-in-law, he took shelter under the porch of the church, facing the posting inn. Nobody in the village could suspect that the unknown pair, whom the church porch was sheltering from the rain, were the great Emperor and the King of Naples.

Suddenly the noise of wheels was heard. A carriage, preceded by an outrider and followed by several other vehicles, arrived. Napoleon quivered with joy. It was she! At last, it was she, Marie Louise, Archduchess of Austria, Empress of the French, Queen of Italy, the wife who would bear him a son, an heir to his immense Empire! Pride and the intoxication of triumph mingled with joy in the heart of the conqueror!

The carriage stopped. The horses were being taken out. Napoleon rushed to the door. He would fain have remained unnoticed for a few moments longer. But the Equerry d'Audenarde, who could scarcely believe his eyes, at this juncture called out, "The

Emperor!" The happy husband threw himself into the arms of his young wife, who was overcome with emotion and surprise. He was enchanted with her at first sight. This superb child, all radiant with freshness and youth, with strength and health, with her pretty fair hair, her blue eyes, her innocence and candour—she is the companion whom he needed. She is the Empress of his dreams! And how the first words she spoke to him flattered him, touched him, and went direct to his heart! After having looked at him for a long time she said, in a timid, sweet voice, "You are much better than your portrait."

A courier set off at full speed for Compiègne to announce that the Emperor and Empress would arrive there that evening about ten o'clock, and the carriage in which Napoleon and Marie Louise were seated, together with the King and Queen of Naples, drove off in the direction of Soissons, followed by those in which were the persons composing the suite of the Empress.

A momentary halt only was made at Soissons. "I had the honour," M. de Bausset tells us, "of being in the carriage with Mesdames de Montmorency and de Mortemart, and the Bishop of Metz. It appeared to me that these ladies were no better pleased than I was at having to go without the excellent dinner that had been prepared for us." The town of Soissons, which had made so many preparations, had the pleasure only

of paying for them. As for the ceremony of the meeting in the pavilion erected at two leagues from the town—a ceremony so sumptuously arranged for the following day—it was no longer thought of. Napoleon assuredly gave evidence of tact and courtesy in relieving his young wife of this formidable ceremony, and especially of the obligation of kneeling before him. He was happily inspired when he placed sentiment before etiquette, and listened only to his own impatience to see the features, and listen to the voice of a wife so ardently longed for.

As soon as the courier from Courcelles arrived, in advance of the Sovereign, at Compiègne to announce the great news, the town was in commotion. No time was lost in preparing illuminations, erecting triumphal arches, and issuing orders that on the entry of the Emperor and Empress a salute of a hundred and one guns should be fired. Marshal Bessières turned out the cavalry of the guard on horseback. The inhabitants of Compiègne, in spite of the bad weather, assembled in crowds and went to meet the Sovereigns, wending their way towards the stone bridge where Louis XV., in 1770, had awaited the Dauphine Marie Antoinette. The court-yards and galleries of the Castle, to which the public were admitted, were filled with sight-seers. Heavy rain was falling, and the night was so dark that without the aid of torches nothing could possibly be seen. At ten o'clock in the

evening a salute announced the arrival of the Imperial couple, who drove rapidly along the avenue. The Princes and Princesses were in waiting at the foot of the staircase. The Emperor presented them to the Empress. The authorities of the town assembled in the gallery, where was also the Prince de Schwarzenberg, the Austrian Ambassador. A group of young girls, dressed in white, welcomed the Sovereign and offered her flowers. The Emperor then led her to her rooms, where she was as much delighted as astonished to find her little dog and her birds from Vienna, as well as a piece of tapestry which she had left unfinished at Burg. This delicate attention on the part of Napoleon moved her to tears. She also saw with pleasure a magnificent piano. After a private supper, to which the Queen of Naples only was admitted, the Emperor took his wife to the room of his sister Pauline, Princess Borghèse, who was ill, and had been unable to witness the presentation. Then he took the Empress back to her rooms, where she went to bed.

According to the ceremonial laid down beforehand, it had been arranged that the pair should spend the first night apart. The Empress was to sleep in her own rooms, and the Emperor in the Chancellery. But this ceremonial fared like that of the meeting of the spouses. The impatience of Napoleon made light of it, and he acted as Henri IV. did in the case of Marie

de Medicis. And, indeed, does not the portrait of the Empress sketched by the Baron de Méneval explain this impatience on the part of her husband? "Marie Louise," says the Emperor's Secretary, "was in all the brilliancy of youth; her figure was regular to perfection; the bodice of her dress was longer than was then worn; and this added to her natural dignity and contrasted with the ungraceful shortness of the waists of our ladies; her complexion was heightened by her journey and her timidity; her bright chestnut hair, luxuriant and fine, surmounted a fresh, plump face, over which her sweet eyes spread a charming expression; her lips, rather full, recalled the type of the reigning family of Austria, just as a slight roundness of the nose distinguishes the Princes of the house of Bourbon; her whole person was redolent of candour and innocence, and an *embonpoint* which she did not retain after her confinement bespoke her good health."

On the following morning Napoleon, while dressing, asked his valet, Constant, if he had noticed the breach he had made in the programme. At the risk of telling a lie, Constant said "No." "At that moment," he says in his Memoirs, "an intimate friend of the Emperor, who was not married, came in. His Majesty, taking him by the ear, said to him, 'My dear fellow, marry a German. They are the best women in the world; sweet, good, innocent, and fresh as roses.' It was evident, from the satisfaction displayed by His Majesty,

that he was sketching a portrait, and that the painter had not long left his model. After paying a certain amount of attention to his personal appearance, the Emperor returned to the Empress, and towards noon he ordered breakfast to be brought up for her and himself, which was served by Her Majesty's ladies at the bedside."

At one o'clock the presentation took place of the ladies and officers of the Household of the Empress, who had not been with her from Braunau. They took the oath of allegiance at the hands of the Sovereign. Afterwards the Colonels, Generals of the Guard, the Ministers, the Grand Officers of the Crown, and the officers and ladies selected for the journey from Compiègne, were presented to the Empress. She had the pleasure of seeing at the Castle her uncle, the Grand Duke of Würzburg, her father's brother, and she conversed with him for a long time about her country and her family. She conversed also with the Prince de Schwarzenberg and the Count and Countess de Metternich. Throughout the day Napoleon was gay to a charming degree. Having, contrary to his wont, dressed a second time for dinner, he put on a fancy dress which, on the advice of his sister Pauline, the arbiter of fashion, he had ordered from the tailor Léger, tailor to the King of Naples, who was passionately fond of elegant and rich costumes. This coat and a white cravat did not suit Napoleon. His simple

uniform with black cravat suited him much better. He never wore the coat recommended by the Princess Pauline but this once, and reverted for every day to the green uniform of the *Chasseurs à Cheval* of the Guard, and for Sundays and receptions to his blue uniform faced with white.

The news that the Countess Lazansky would accompany the Empress to Paris had been generally made known, and in it the public had discerned a proof of the confidence and cordiality in which the love of the Viennese for their Prince delighted to display itself. The more cordiality there had been in the public rejoicing and expectation, kept alive by accounts of the *fêtes* and greedy of all details of the journey, the greater was the surprise, and even anxiety, caused by the precipitate return of the former Grand Mistress. There were disorderly meetings at which the affair was spoken of in a very sinister manner. "The reconciliation," says the Baron de Méneval, "between the aristocracy and the Austrian nation was not sincere; regrets were not slow in succeeding the departure of Marie Louise. The people of Vienna, at the instigation of Russian and English agents, assembled in the streets and public squares, and were loud in their complaints of the sacrifice which, so they said, had been exacted of their Emperor. The authorities were obliged to deal rigorously with these assemblies." The Emperor of Austria himself mentioned them to

the French Ambassador. Count Otto wrote on the 24th of March to the Duke de Cadore:—"On the return of the Emperor from Lintz, I requested a private audience to congratulate him on his safe arrival. This kind of audience is only granted here to Ambassadors of Powers allied to the Imperial family, and I seized upon this opportunity of enjoying so honourable a prerogative. His Majesty received me with his customary kindness. He appeared well satisfied with what had taken place at Braunau and with the delicate attention paid to H.M. the Empress from the moment of her arrival. 'But what have you done to Madame Lazansky?' continued the Emperor. 'Why send her back? Your master gave my daughter permission to take with her a lady in waiting, and if there was an exception to be made, Madame Lazansky deserved to be the person excepted, for she has always shown herself well disposed towards France. As far as I am concerned, I assure you that I do not attach any importance to it; but the public are already amusing themselves by indulging in a thousand absurd conjectures, and last night there were disturbances in the city and the suburbs.' I replied to His Majesty that the attempt to disturb the public repose was undoubtedly the last effort of some of the foreign intriguers who always abound in the city; and that as the young Empress had been handed over at Braunau, nothing could be more simple or natural than the

return of Madame Lazansky; but that, in order to set the public mind entirely at rest, an announcement should be made that the lady had received orders to withdraw as soon as she perceived that the Empress had become accustomed to her new Court. 'I have already done so,' replied the Emperor, 'and it would be desirable that the same language should be used in France in order to keep mischief-makers silent.'" (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

Some hours after this audience the Prince de Metternich, father of the celebrated Minister, and charged with the conduct of the Ministry during the absence of his son, had a conversation with the Ambassador about this regrettable incident. "The Prince de Metternich," adds Count Otto, in the same despatch, "called on me to give me the latest details of what transpired last night. He had been busy up to 3 a.m. in receiving the reports of the police and in ordering the arrest of the most turbulent of the mob. They were scattered about among the *cafés*, and had carried their effrontery so far as to say that the French Army was again in movement, and that Napoleon's object was to distract the attention of this Court."

Nevertheless, the Empress Marie Louise continued her triumphal journey. At Stuttgard she found a Court and a population as enthusiastic as at Munich. In the capital of Würtemberg, as in the Bavarian capital, there were illuminations, a State dinner, a re-

ception, and a theatrical performance. At Stuttgard the Empress received a letter from Napoleon, which was brought to her by the Count de Bearvau. Another letter from the Emperor was handed to her by the Count de Bondy, at Carlsruhe, where her reception was no less brilliant than at Munich and Stuttgard.

On the 23rd of March Marie Louise was at Rastadt, where the Hereditary Grand Duke of Baden, who had married Mdlle. Stéphanie de Beauharnais, the adopted daughter of Napoleon, invited her to breakfast. At the bridge over the Rhine, where the Empress arrived at five o'clock in the afternoon, she found twenty French Generals and several divisions under arms. The bridge was gaily decorated. The bells were ringing, and salvoes of artillery thundered continuously. On reaching the bridge the Sovereign was welcomed by the Prefect of the Lower Rhine, and at the gates of the city by the Mayor. "In Strasburg," says General de Ségur, "France in her turn received Marie Louise. The enthusiasm, entirely military, on this German frontier was all the more lively, more true, and more universal, because in this Archduchess we saw the most brilliant trophy of the glory of our arms, and we thought we saw, after eighteen years' warfare, the pledge of peace, assured this time."

On the 23rd of March Marie Louise wrote from Strasburg a letter to her father, in which she excused herself for her long silence, caused, she said, by

the indescribable fatigue of a journey during which she had to rise at 5 a.m., travel all day, and spend the evenings either at receptions or performances. She added that she had just had submitted to her, for her orders, the programme of the Strasburg *fêtes*. "I cannot tell you, dear papa," she remarked on this subject, "how funny it seems for me, who have never had any will of my own, now to have orders to give." The Empress had the pleasure at Strasburg of meeting the Count de Metternich, who had left Vienna on the 12th of March, had stopped at several of the German Courts, and was on his way to Paris. The *fêtes* in the chief town of Alsace were very brilliant. A newspaper of the town said on the 24th of March: "Among those present at the *fêtes* we may mention the Austrian General Count de Neipperg, who was here on a mission from his Government, as well as several officers." Who would then have predicted that the day would come when this unknown General would be, as the husband of Marie Louise, the successor of Napoleon?

At Strasburg the Empress received her first letter from her father since her departure from Vienna. She replied to it on the spot. "I beg of you, dear father," she said, in her very affectionate reply, "to pray ardently for me. Rest assured that I will endeavour with all my strength to fulfil the duties of the position you have assigned to me. I am at ease about my

fate. I am sure I shall be happy. I should like you to read the letter the Emperor Napoleon has written to me. It is full of attention to me." At each step she advanced on French soil Marie Louise became more and more reconciled to her lot.

On his part the Emporor awaited his new companion with the impatience of a youth of twenty. "Every day," says his valet Constant, "he sent her a letter written by himself, and she replied regularly. The first letters of the Empress were rather short and probably rather cold, for the Emperor said nothing about them. But the others were longer and by degrees became warmer, and the Emperor read them with transports of joy. He found the messengers slow, though they broke down their horses. He came back one day from shooting with a brace of pheasants in his hand, which he himself had shot, and followed by several footmen conveying the rarest flowers from Saint Cloud. He wrote a note, sent for his first page, and said to him: 'Be ready in ten minutes to set out in a carriage. In it you will find this present, which with this letter you will give the Empress with your own hand. Above all, do not spare the horses; go at full speed, and fear nothing.' The youth asked for nothing better than to obey the Emperor. Armed with this authority which allowed him to go as fast as he could, he was open-handed with the postillions, and reached Strasburg in four-and-twenty hours."

CHAPTER XI.

COMPIÈGNE.

NAPOLEON had been at Compiègne since the 20th of March, and there he had been cursing the dilatoriness of etiquette which still separated him from the ardently desired moment when he might at last see his new companion and throw himself in her arms. He had had the castle repaired and sumptuously furnished so that her reception might be worthy of the daughter of the Cæsars. The great gallery had been ornamented with panelling in gold and pillars in stucco. The garden was replanted and decorated with statues. Water had been brought from the Oise by mechanical appliances. All the members of the Imperial family were on the spot. The Court was splendid. The Emperor wished to dazzle his young wife with unwonted magnificence.

The ceremonial of meeting had been arranged beforehand with the most minute care. It was

The Empress left Strasburg on the 25th of March in the direction of Nancy. She dined at Bar-le-Duc and at Vitry-le-François received the Prince de Schwarzenberg, the Austrian Ambassador, and the Countess de Metternich. She had just decided to hasten her journey and the moment fixed by etiquette for her meeting with her husband. The hour so impatiently awaited by Napoleon was approaching.

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arranged that this solemnity should take place on the 28th of March between Soissons and Compiègne. The Emperor was to leave this latter town with the Princes and Princesses of his family. Detachments of cavalry of the Garde Impériale were to precede and follow them. At two leagues from Soissons he was to find a pavilion composed of three tents, into which access would be gained by two staircases, the first on the Compiègne side, the other on that of Soissons. Napoleon was to enter by the first, and Marie Louise by the second. The pavilion, richly arrayed, was surrounded by trees. Close by murmured a silvery brook. The centre tent—that in which the Emperor and Empress were to behold each other for the first time—was adorned with purple and gold. It had been decided that Marie Louise, as soon as she saw her husband, was to kneel. But he was to raise her immediately and embrace her, and then both were to get into a State carriage, and the two *cortéges* were to unite and form but one.

On the 29th of March the Count de Praslin left Compiègne for Vienna bearing two letters, one from Napoleon, the other from Marie Louise, for the Emperor Francis II. In his letter Napoleon said to his father-in-law: "Allow me to thank you for the beautiful present you have made me. May your paternal heart rejoice in the happiness of your child!" The letter from Marie Louise was redolent

of satisfaction and joy. After having told her father with what delicacy her husband had spared her the awkwardness of a first interview, the Empress added, "From that moment I have been almost intimate with him; he loves me profoundly and I return his affection. I am sure I shall live happily with him. My health is always good. I have quite got over the fatigue of my journey. I assure you, my dear father, that the Emperor is as careful of my health as you are. As I have a slight cold he will not let me get up before two o'clock. All that is wanting to my happiness is your dear presence, and my husband also wants to see you. He wishes it as sincerely as I do." Five days afterwards she wrote: "I can tell you, my dear father, that your prophecy has come true. I am as happy as possible. The more friendship and confidence I display to my husband the more he overwhelms me with attentions of every kind. The whole family are most affectionate to me, and I do not believe in the truth of all the evil that has been spoken of them. My mother-in-law is a very amiable and worthy Princess who has received me very cordially. The Queens of Naples, Holland, and Westphalia, and the King of Holland are very amiable. I have also made the acquaintance of the Vice-King and Vice-Queen of Italy. She is very pretty."

The Court left the Castle of Compiègne on the 31st of March. On entering the Bois de Boulogne the

Emperor and Empress found Count Frochot, Prefect of the Seine, and a crowd of Parisians there. The Prefect made a speech which concluded thus: "Escorted from Vienna to this place by the love of nations, your Majesty knows now that by the height of your virtues, as well as by the graces of your person, your destiny is to reign over all hearts. Ours will be, Madame, to make you find in your most habitual residence the country which you love best, that in which you were of yore beloved, and to succeed in always rendering worthy of your Majesties the homage of our fidelity, our respect, and our love."

At half-past six in the evening Napoleon and Marie Louise arrived at the Castle of Saint Cloud, where there were awaiting them in full dress the Marshals, Cardinals, grand dignitaries of the Empire, Senators, and Councillors of State. At the Castle there was a family dinner. After dinner the ladies of the palace of the Crown of Italy, viz., the Countesses Porro, Visconti, Thiene, and Trivulci, and Mesdames Gonfalonieri, Trotti, de Rava, Fe, Mocenigo, and Montecuculli, were presented by the Italian lady-in-waiting, the Duchess Litta, and took the oath of allegiance on the hands of the Empress-Queen. The civil marriage was to be celebrated on the following day, the 1st of April, at the Palace of Saint Cloud, and the religious marriage on the day after, the 2nd of April, in the square room in the Palace of the Louvre, the room

between the grand gallery and the gallery of Apollo. The solemn entry of the Emperor and Empress into their capital on the day of the celebration of the religious marriage was to be made amid dazzling pomp. Foreigners had come from all parts of Europe to be present at this grand spectacle, and at every point which the Imperial procession was to pass, the smallest room was let as high as 600 francs. Never perhaps, either in France or elsewhere, had a ceremony excited such curiosity.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CIVIL MARRIAGE.

THE civil marriage of Napoleon and Marie Louise was celebrated at the Palace of Saint Cloud on Sunday, April 1st, 1810. At the end of the Apollo Gallery, decorated with magnificent frescoes by Mignard, and completely filled with reminiscences of the great century, two arm-chairs had been placed on a dais surmounted by a canopy, the one on the right for the Emperor, that on the left for the Empress. Below the dais and to the side of it, there was a table covered with a rich cloth on which were an inkstand and the registers of the State. At two p.m. the Colonel General of the Garde on duty, and the Grand Officers of the Crown of France and Italy, went to fetch their Majesties. The procession, as soon as it was formed, set out, passed through the private room of the Emperor, the Salon des Princes, the Salle du Trône, and the Salon de Mars, and reached the Apollo

Gallery in the following order :—Ushers, Heralds of Arms, Pages, Assistant Masters of the Ceremonies, Masters of the Ceremonies, Officers of the Household of the King of Italy, Equerries to the Emperor, Aides-de-Camp of the Emperor, the two Equerries on duty, the Aide-de-Camp on duty, the Governor of the Palace, the Secretary of State of the Imperial Family, the Grand Officers of the Crown of Italy, the Grand Chamberlains of France and Italy, the Grand Master of the Ceremonies and the Grand Equerry of Italy, the Princes who were Grand Dignitaries, Princes of the Blood, the Emperor and Empress. Behind their Majesties, the Colonel General of the Garde on duty, the Grand Marshal of the Palace, the Grand Master of the Household of Italy, the Grand Almoners of France and Italy, the Lord-in-Waiting and the Prince Equerry of the Empress bearing the train of her robe, the Ladies-in-Waiting of France and Italy and the Lady of the Bedchamber, the Princesses of the Blood, the Ladies of the Palace, the Ladies-in-Waiting to the Princesses, and the Officers on duty of the Households of the Princes and Princesses.

The procession having reached the Apollo Gallery, the Ushers, Heralds of Arms, and Pages took their places in two equal lines right and left in the Salon de Mars close to the door. The Officers and Grand Officers of France and Italy, the Ladies-in-Waiting, and the Lady of the Bedchamber placed themselves

behind the arm-chairs of their Majesties according to their rank. The Emperor and Empress took their places on the throne, the Princes and Princesses right and left of the platform in the following order, according to their family rank:

To the right of the Emperor:

The Emperor's Mother.
Prince Louis Napoleon, King of Holland.
Prince Jerome Napoleon, King of Westphalia.
Prince Borghése, Duc de Guastalla.
Prince Joachim Napoleon, King of Naples.
Prince Eugéne, Vice-King of Italy.
The Prince Arch-Chancellor.
The Prince Vice-Grand Elector.

To the left of the Empress:

The Princess Julie, Queen of Spain.
The Princess Hortense, Queen of Holland.
The Princess Catherine, Queen of Westphalia.
The Princess Elisa, Grand Duchess of Tuscany.
The Princess Pauline, Duchess of Guastalla.
The Princess Caroline, Queen of Naples.
The Grand Duke of Würzburg.
The Princess Augusta, Vice-Queen of Italy.
The Princess Stéphanie, Hereditary Grand Duchess of Baden.
The Hereditary Grand Duke of Baden.
The Prince Arch-Treasurer.
The Prince Vice-Constable.

As soon as the Emperor was seated, the Prince Arch-Chancellor of the Empire, followed by the Secretary of State of the Imperial Family, approached the Throne, made a profound salute, and said:—"In the name of the Emperor (at these words their Majesties rose), Sire, does your Imperial and Royal Majesty declare that you will take in marriage her Imperial and Royal Highness, Marie Louise, Archduchess of Austria, here present?" Napoleon replied: "I declare that I take in marriage her Imperial and Royal Highness, Marie Louise, Archduchess of Austria, here present." A similar question in these terms was addressed to Marie Louise:—"Your Imperial and Royal Highness, Marie Louise, Archduchess of Austria, do you declare that you take in marriage the Emperor and King Napoleon, here present?" She replied:—"I declare that I take in marriage his Majesty the Emperor and King Napoleon, here present." Then the Prince Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès pronounced the marriage in these terms:—"In the name of the Emperor and of the law, I declare that his Imperial and Royal Majesty Napoleon, Emperor of the French, King of Italy, and her Imperial and Royal Highness the Archduchess Marie Louise are united in marriage." At the same moment the ceremony was announced by salvoes of artillery fired at Saint Cloud, and repeated in Paris by the guns of the Invalides. Napoleon at that moment

must have experienced a vivid feeling of pride. The Apollo Gallery, in which the ceremony took place, recalled to him memories in which he delighted. In that room were seated the Ancients on that decisive day of the 19th of Brumaire, the beginning of his prodigious power, and there he had addressed to them his terrifying sentence: "Remember that I march onwards accompanied by the gods of fortune and of war." There on the 18th of May, 1804, he had said to the Senators who were going to proclaim the Empire: "I accept the title which you believe will be useful to the glory of the nation. I trust that France will never repent the honours she is showering on my family." And in this same Apollo Gallery he was triumphantly marrying the daughter of the German Cæsars. The Palace of Saint Cloud had brought him good luck. And yet it was from this palace that he set out, two years later, for the disastrous campaign in Russia; and from it, too, sixty years afterwards, his unfortunate successor set out for a still more lamentable war. And what future was in store for this Castle of Saint Cloud, so brilliant and so bright? But in 1810 who would have felt any dread as to its future?

After the marriage was announced the documents had to be signed. The Secretary of State of the Imperial Family handed the pen to the Emperor and then to the Empress, who signed, without rising or leaving their places, on a table brought for that pur-

pose in front of the throne. The Princes and Princesses then drew near the table, and after having bowed to their Majesties, signed in the order set forth in the ceremonial. The ceremony having ended with the signatures of the Prince Arch-Chancellor and the Secretary of State of the Imperial Family, the procession re-formed in the same order that it had entered the Gallery, and re-conducted their Majesties to the apartments of the Empress.

One thing only might, perhaps, have vaguely troubled the mind of Napoleon. Fourteen of the Italian Cardinals had accepted, as regular and sufficient, the sentence of the Diocesan of Paris in regard to the non-validity of his religious marriage with Josephine. Thirteen others, on the contrary, and Consalvi was among the number, thought that the Pope only had authority to decide so weighty a matter. A rumour was current that the thirteen recalcitrant Cardinals would not be present at the nuptial benediction to be given on the following day to the Emperor and Marie Louise in the square room in the Louvre. But Napoleon, whose anger had been aroused by the mere idea of such a thing, exclaimed:—"Bah! they will never dare."

In the evening, after dinner their Majesties betook themselves to the private drawing-room. The procession which was to accompany them to the theatre assembled in the adjoining rooms. The orangery,

which had to be crossed on the way to the Court Theatre, was illuminated. The opera selected was *Iphigénie en Aulide*, one of the favourite operas of the unhappy Queen Marie Antoinette, the great-aunt of the new Empress. The selection of such a piece did not seem a happy one. Did not Iphigénie recall the idea of a sacrifice, and did not the aristocracy of Europe consider that Marie Louise, too, was sacrificed? General de Ségur, in spite of his enthusiastic admiration for the Imperial glories, has said in his Memoirs: "The predominant feeling in Paris, apart from curiosity, was astonishment at the presence of a Princess ascending a throne erected so near the scaffold where her blood had flowed, a cruel reminiscence which wounded the susceptibilities natural to all Frenchmen, and especially to Parisians. Their minds unwittingly suffered from a union which showed too clearly to what a painful sacrifice the Austrian Court had been compelled to resign itself, and which seemed to say that victory had been pushed too far. There was a disposition, also, to find fault with this choice as an imitation of Louis XVI., whose unhappy fate was attributed to a similar one." But the crowd, oblivious and greedy of pleasure alone, which thronged under the trees of the lovely park of Saint Cloud on the evening of the 1st of April, 1810, indulged in no such reflections. "The illumination of the park," said the *Moniteur*, "had been arranged with consum-

mate skill; the play of the fountains was rendered still more brilliant by the light brought to bear on the falling water. The effect of the grand cascade was really magical. The poets, in their descriptions of the enchanted gardens, gave only a faint idea of such a sight and such effects of light. Games of all kinds had been prepared all over the park. An immense crowd from Paris and the suburbs took part in the *fête*, which was full of movement and gaiety. The arrangement of this brilliant spectacle was novel, and surpassed every expectation." At Saint Cloud on Sunday, the 1st of April, 1810, the day when the civil marriage was celebrated, the weather was tolerably fine, while in Paris the streets were inundated by the rain, which fell in torrents. On the following day, Monday, the 2nd of April, the day of the religious marriage, it rained at Saint Cloud, and the weather in Paris was magnificent, as if on purpose to detract in no possible way from the pomp of the procession and the brilliancy of the marvellous illuminations in the evening! The star of the Emperor, it was said, prevailed on the two occasions over the winds of the equinox. And the *Moniteur*, invariably a courtier, said: "The day of the 2nd of April was set apart for the entry of their Majesties into the Capital and the ceremony of the marriage. One very remarkable circumstance struck everybody at once; it excited numerous and favourable comparisons, and was the general topic of conversation. On the

night preceding the *fête* there was an almost continuous tempest. People might, therefore, be excused for thinking that the immense preparations which for a month past had been a very curious sight in the Capital, would be reserved for a more favourable day. The reverse happened, and an observation so often made was once more repeated. The favourable temperature caused by the presence of the sun was all the more remarkable because it only seemed to last just as long as was necessary for the success of the *fête;* it commenced with the *fête* and ended with it, and never perhaps was there a more correct application of the well-known verse in which Virgil, recalling a storm which lasted throughout one night, and the serenity of a day set apart for a grand spectacle, pourtrays the celestial empire as shared between Augustus and Jupiter —

> Nocte pluit totâ, redeunt spectacula mane,
> Divisum imperium cum Jove Cæsar habet.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ENTRY INTO PARIS.

From daybreak on Monday, the 2nd of April, 1810, the towns and country adjacent to Paris were astir, and their inhabitants in streams were converging on the road to Saint Cloud. From eight o'clock in the morning every window was adorned by elegantly-dressed women. Platforms had been erected everywhere. The barriers, roofs, and even the trees were laden with innumerable spectators. At the spring of the lateral arches of the Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile seats had been placed as in an amphitheatre, where a large number of people had assembled by invitation from the Prefect of the Seine. The Arc de Triomphe, which was in course of erection in stone, the piers of which were already about twenty feet above the ground, was modelled in wood and canvas for the solemn entry of the Emperor into Paris. The rapidity with which the work had been pushed on savoured of

enchantment. Nearly five thousand workmen had been employed on it, and in less than twenty days the provisional monument, an image of the permanent one, was entirely completed. On the attic was this inscription: "*A Napoléon et Marie Louise, la ville de Paris.*" The upper part of the arcade, at the spring of the arch, was ornamented with bas-reliefs and sunken panels with an eagle in the centre.

On twelve medallions, six on the side of Passy, and six on that of Roule, were—the portrait of the Emperor with the scroll, "*Le bonheur du monde est dans ses mains*" (address from the Senate)—a laurel throwing out several shoots, with these words, "*Il a fait notre gloire*"—a roaring leopard, with the scroll, "*Il riait de nos discordes, il pleure de notre union*"—the monogram of Napoleon and Marie Louise with this inscription, "*Nous l'aimons pour l'amour de lui, nous l'aimerons pour elle-meme*" (address from the Senate) —Love crowning the helmet of Mars with myrtles and roses, with these words, "*Elle charmera les loisirs du héros*"—the sun with a rainbow and this inscription, "*Elle annonce à la terre des jours sereins*—the portrait of the Empress and the scroll, "*Nous lui devons le bonheur de l'auguste époux qui l'a placée si haut dans sa pensée*" (address from the Senate)—the Danube with these words, "*Il nous enrichit de ce qu'il a de plus cher*" —the arms of Austria—the monogram of their Majesties with the inscription, "*Elle sera pour les Français*

une veritable mère" (reply of the Emperor)—the Seine with the inscription, "*Notre amour reconnâitra le don qu'il nous fait*"—and lastly the arms of France.

The six bas-reliefs represented the following subjects:—Legislation: the Emperor robed in his Imperial mantle and seated on the throne, pointing with his hand to tables on which the Codes were inscribed, and Innocence in the form of a young virgin sleeping peacefully at the foot of the Imperial throne—National Industry: merchants presenting to the Emperor manufactures of all kinds out of their manufactories—The Arrival of the Empress in Paris—The Adornment of the Capital—The Mercy of the Emperor: the Emperor seated, his hand on his sword, being crowned by Victory and generously pardoning his conquered foes—The Union of the Emperor and Empress: Napoleon and Marie Louise joining hands in token of alliance on an altar placed at the foot of the statue of Peace.

Salvoes of artillery resounded, announcing that the Emperor and Empress had just left the Palace of Saint Cloud. At the same moment, and as if in obedience to a signal, the sun rose in the horizon. From that moment his presence was continuous throughout the day, dispelling every cloud, and at the precise moment of the arrival of the procession at the Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile, he shone his brightest. The cavalry of the Garde Impériale led the way, followed in succession by lancers, chasseurs and dragoons, preceded by their

bands; then came the heralds of arms on horseback, and then the carriages were seen, that of the Emperor drawn by eight horses, and the remainder by six. The chariot in which Napoleon and Marie Louise were seated was the celebrated coronation chariot. Its four sides were made of large clear glass, framed in minute chased and gilded mountings, allowing everybody to see, as distinctly as if the carriage had been uncovered, the Emperor in his white and red velvet robe, and the Empress wearing the Crown diamonds and a Court mantle. Above this splendid State chariot was a species of dome in gold which, upheld by four eagles with outstretched wings, was surmounted by an enormous crown. The Marshals of France and the Colonels General of the Guard were on horseback on either side near the carriage door, the aides-de-camp being alongside the horses, and the equerries on a level with the hind wheels. In accordance with the custom observed on all occasions when the Emperor made use of his State chariot, as many pages as possible were mounted behind the vehicle and on the driving-seat by the side of the coachman.

At one o'clock the procession arrived at the Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile. Twelve pieces of ordnance were placed on the adjacent coigns of vantage on the monument, and twelve others in the garden of the Tuileries, on the terrace by the water side. Their salutes were repeated by the guns of the Invalides.

Orchestras, placed at intervals, played triumphal marches. The bells of all the churches rang out merry peals. The Imperial carriage halted under the archway of the Arc de Triomphe, where the Governor of Paris, the Prefect of the Seine, and the Prefect of Police, accompanied by the twelve mayors, received the Sovereigns.

Count Frochot, Prefect of the Seine, then made the following speech: "Sire, your Majesty is at length intent on your own happiness. You have succeeded in that as in all your enterprises, and if ever in the annals of the world any marriage of a Sovereign was ever attended by so much greatness, never could love and glory more fitly unite their interests or better inspire your Majesty. By the shouts of joy which have just been heard resounding under the arch of this monument erected to your triumphs, your Majesty may judge that the prayers of your good city of Paris, all the prayers indeed of your people, have been listened to. And it is not only throughout the vast extent of your Empire that this rejoicing prevails. Sire, the whole Continent celebrates with the same transports the union formed by the greatest of its Monarchs, and a hundred different nations together bless these august bonds knit in secret by Providence, these bonds so dear to our hearts, because they at one and the same time offer us a pledge of the happiness of your Majesty and that of the sweetest hopes of the country."

Then addressing the Empress, the Prefect of the Seine thus continued his speech : "You will realise this twofold hope, Madame, and seated on the foremost throne in the universe, you will embellish it for the Prince; you will render him all the dearer to his subjects; you will ensure its continuance to posterity. The mere presence of your Majesty, Madame, reveals to every eye the precious gifts of God who calls you to this throne. In order to admire you we have no longer need of report, and already are those words of your immortal spouse fulfilled, that beloved at first for his sake, you will speedily be so for your own. May it be permitted to Paris, Madame, to apply those words to herself ! May you first of all honour with your kindness, and afterwards love for itself, that great portion of the immense family of the French which on this solemn day unites itself proudly to the destinies of your Majesty by every bond of fidelity, respect, and love !"

The Empress replied that she loved the city of Paris, because she knew all the affection borne by its inhabitants to the Emperor. Young girls dressed in white offered her baskets of flowers, which she graciously accepted. The procession then moved on.

Then Marie Louise, after having passed between a double line of picked troops and amid an enthusiastic crowd, along the bright avenue of the Champs Elysées, made for ovations, arrived at the accursed, the fatal place. Did the salvoes of artillery, the blasts of

trumpets, and the ringing of bells, so deafen the young Empress as to make her forget that on that very place the hideous guillotine did its ghastly work for two years without interruption, and devoured more than fifteen hundred heads? Would the cheers that resounded from all sides drive away from her thoughts the roll of the drums which drowned the voice of the unhappy Louis XVI. at the moment when he, the son of Saint Louis, essayed to speak to the people before ascending into heaven? Ah! livid, blood-stained shadows and headless bodies appeared on that sinister spot. Sixteen years had not passed away since the very cattle refused to cross it, so strong was the smell of blood. The terraces of the Tuileries swarmed with people, and, as the *Moniteur* said, the stone statues of Fame which surmounted the railings of the garden seemed ready to spring forth and carry far and wide the news of that great day. Well, sixteen years and a half previously those same terraces were equally crowded with people. Yes, an enormous crowd then congregated, on the cold and foggy morning of the 16th of October, 1793, to see a woman die—a woman of whom the new Empress was grand-niece twice over; on the paternal side, through her father, the son of the Emperor Leopold II.; on the maternal side, through her mother, daughter of Marie Caroline, Queen of Naples. Yes, yes, on the very spot which the Imperial procession passed with

so much pomp, in front of the railings of the Tuileries, thirty yards from the centre of the square, just where stood the pedestal on which were erected in succession the equestrian statue of Louis XV. and the Statue of Liberty, there had appeared, sixteen years and a half previously, the scaffold of Marie Antoinette. Did the State chariot, that superb and glittering Coronation chariot, obliterate the memory of the tumbril of the martyr Queen? And when Marie Louise saw the Tuileries for the first time, could she help thinking of the last, the supreme look turned by the Queen, her near relation, on that mournful palace before she gave her noble and charming head to the butchers? Let courtiers vie with each other in flattery and homage, let poets sing the hymn of glory and the song of Hymen, but all this concert of adulation will not succeed in stifling the inexorable and lamentable voice of history.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE.

THE procession arrived at the entrance to the gardens of the Tuileries. It then passed underneath a graceful triumphal arch, wound round the basins along the parterres, which the crowd respected, and halted before the walls of the palace. The centre block was embellished by a grand orchestra separated into two parts by a passage leading to the vestibule. An arch, above which was placed a tribune in the shape of a tent, occupied the centre of the orchestra. On the bas-reliefs and other ornaments were initials surrounded by flowers, emblems, and ingeniously varied allegories. The carriages passed beneath this arch. The Emperor and Empress put foot to ground in the vestibule, and went up the grand staircase. Marie Louise entered the bedroom of the State suite through a large door, both wings of which were thrown open. The Ladies-in-Waiting of France and Italy, as well as

the Lady of the Bedchamber, were conducted thither from the throne-room through the dressing-room. They relieved the Empress of her Court mantle, and replaced it by the Imperial mantle. During this time the procession had moved to the Diana Gallery, where it re-formed in proper order, and on the arrival of their Majesties it proceeded onwards through the grand Gallery of the Musée du Louvre as far as the square room, which had been transformed into a chapel for the celebration of the religious marriage.

What a magnificent spectacle was that presented by this magnificent gallery, divided into nine compartments of unequal size, the divisions of which were formed by arches raised on marble columns with gilt bases and capitals—this so justly famous gallery where the finest pictures by the masters of every school were collected together ! The invited guests began to take up their positions at ten o'clock in the morning. They reached their destinations by means of the staircases in the central block, one on the Quai and the other on the Carrousel. The Imperial procession only was to enter by the gate of the Pavilion of Flora. All along the gallery there were two rows of benches for the ladies, and two rows of men standing up behind them, so that about 8,000 persons could be accommodated without inconvenience. Barriers were placed in front of the first row of benches, so that the passage should be perfectly free for the Emperor and Empress.

Orchestras, placed at intervals, played triumphal marches. The bells of all the churches rang out merry peals. The Imperial carriage halted under the archway of the Arc de Triomphe, where the Governor of Paris, the Prefect of the Seine, and the Prefect of Police, accompanied by the twelve mayors, received the Sovereigns.

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Then addressing the Empress, the Prefect of the Seine thus continued his speech : " You will realise this twofold hope, Madame, and seated on the foremost throne in the universe, you will embellish it for the Prince; you will render him all the dearer to his subjects; you will ensure its continuance to posterity. The mere presence of your Majesty, Madame, reveals to every eye the precious gifts of God who calls you to this throne. In order to admire you we have no longer need of report, and already are those words of your immortal spouse fulfilled, that beloved at first for his sake, you will speedily be so for your own. May it be permitted to Paris, Madame, to apply those words to herself ! May you first of all honour with your kindness, and afterwards love for itself, that great portion of the immense family of the French which on this solemn day unites itself proudly to the destinies of your Majesty by every bond of fidelity, respect, and love ! "

The Empress replied that she loved the city of Paris, because she knew all the affection borne by its inhabitants to the Emperor. Young girls dressed in white offered her baskets of flowers, which she graciously accepted. The procession then moved on.

Then Marie Louise, after having passed between a double line of picked troops and amid an enthusiastic crowd, along the bright avenue of the Champs Elysées, made for ovations, arrived at the accursed, the fatal place. Did the salvoes of artillery, the blasts of

then took their seats on the platform, the Empress on the left of the Emperor. The rest of the procession took up their positions as follows:—On the right of the Emperor, below the platform, Prince Louis Napoleon, King of Holland; Prince Jerome Napoleon, King of Westphalia; Prince Borghèse, Duke of Guastalla; Prince Joachim Murat, King of Naples; Prince Eugène de Beauharnais, Vice-King of Italy; the Hereditary Grand Duke of Baden; the Prince Arch-Chancellor (Cambacérès); the Prince Arch-Treasurer (Lebrun); the Prince Vice-Constable (Berthier); and the Prince Vice-Grand Elector (Talleyrand). To the left of the Emperor below the platform, the Queen Mother; the Princess Julie, Queen of Spain; the Princess Hortense, Queen of Holland; the Princess Catherine, Queen of Westphalia; the Princess Elisa, Grand Duchess of Tuscany; the Princess Pauline, Duchess of Guastalla; the Princess Caroline, Queen of Naples; the Grand Duke of Würzburg; the Princess Auguste, Vice Queen of Italy; and, the Princess Stephanie, Hereditary Grand Duchess of Baden. The Colonel General of the Garde on duty, the Grand Marshal, the Grand Chamberlain, the Grand Equerry, the Chief Almoner of the Emperor, the Grand Officer of Italy, the French Lady-in-Waiting, the Italian Lady-in-Waiting, the Lady of the Bedchamber, the Lord-in-Waiting, the Chief Equerry, and the Chief Almoner of the Empress, were stationed behind the chairs allotted to their Majesties.

As he passed along the gallery Napoleon seemed at the height of his joy. He was radiant. But suddenly his countenance fell. "Where are the Cardinals?" he said in an irritated voice to his Chapel-Master, the Abbé de Pradt, "I do not see them." He saw them very clearly but he perceived that they were not all there. "A large number of them are present," timidly replied the Abbé de Pradt. "Moreover, among them there are some who are infirm and others very old." "Nothing of the kind," replied the Emperor, turning his eyes towards some empty benches. "The fools! The fools!" he said angrily, and his look became more and more threatening. It was true then! The thirteen Italian Cardinals, who had stated that they would not come, were audacious enough to keep their word. What! They dared to persist in a factious resolution which he, the Emperor, had defied them to carry out! What! They were bold enough to brave him, to affront him publicly! They in their turn should meet with an affront. They would not be present at his marriage to-day. Very well! To-morrow he would expel them in shame from the Court.

However, the ceremony commenced. The Emperor continued to be absorbed and could scarcely shake off his sudden displeasure. The Grand Almoner, after having made a profound reverence to their Majesties, intoned the *Veni Creator*, and then proceeded to the benediction of the thirteen gold pieces and the ring.

Napoleon and Marie Louise rose, approached the altar, and standing up joined their right hands after having taken off their gloves. The officiating priest asked the Emperor, "Sire, you declare to recognise, and you swear before God, and in presence of the Holy Church, that you now take as your lawful wife Her Imperial and Royal Highness, Madame Marie Louise, Archduchess of Austria, here present?" Napoleon replied, "Yes, sir." The priest continued, "You promise and swear to be faithful to her in all things, as a faithful husband should be to his wife according to the commandment of God?"—"Yes, sir," replied the Sovereign. The priest then addressed the Empress. "Madame, you declare and swear before God, and in the presence of the Holy Church, that you now take as your lawful husband the Emperor Napoleon, here present?"—"Yes, sir."—"You promise and swear to be faithful to him in all things, as a faithful wife should be to her husband, according to the commandment of God?"—"Yes, sir." The priest then handed the Emperor the gold pieces and the ring. The Emperor presented the gold pieces to the Empress, and placed the nuptial ring on the fourth finger of her left hand, saying, "I give you this ring in token of the marriage which we are contracting." The priest made the sign of the cross on the hand of the Empress, and said, "*In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti. Amen.*" Mass was then celebrated. After the Gospel, the senior Bishop present

took the Holy Book for their Majesties to kiss, and wafted the incense over them. After the benediction the Grand Almoner offered them the holy water, and then returned to the altar and intoned the *Te Deum*, which was chanted by the chapel choir and produced a great impression.

When the ceremony was over the procession reformed and resumed its progress. The Emperor gave his hand to the Empress, and it was remarked, not without astonishment, that when he was going along the Gallery of the Musée his countenance, previously so radiant and so triumphant, had no longer the same glad expression. Was the absence of the thirteen Cardinals enough to cast a gloom over this magnificent *fête?* The procession, after having emerged from the Gallery of the Musée, proceeded through the Pavilion of Flora to the Gallery of Diana, where it halted. The Sovereigns and the Imperial family entered the Emperor's room, which opened out of this Gallery. Marie Louise then went into her bedroom. The Lady-in-Waiting and the Lady of the Bedchamber relieved her of the Imperial mantle and the crown, and handed them to the Grand Chamberlain, whose duty it was to have them taken back in state to Notre Dame. Then their Majesties showed themselves on the balcony of the Salle des Maréchaux and witnessed a march-past by the infantry and cavalry of the Garde Impériale. Officers and soldiers waved their arms, and filled the

air with hearty cheers, which were repeated by an enthusiastic crowd.

The Imperial banquet took place at seven o'clock in the evening in the room of the Tuileries used as a theatre. The stage was replaced by a decoration similar to that of the room, so that in place of a stage and auditorium distinct, one immense room was to be seen, perfectly regular and harmonious. Two cupolas, sustained by double arches and pendentives ornamented by columns, furnished the decoration. One of the two divisions, parallel with the other, was occupied by the table intended for the Imperial banquet; it was placed on a platform and surmounted by a magnificent canopy. As soon as dinner was served, the Grand Chamberlain handed the finger-bowl to the Emperor, the Grand Equerry gave him his chair, and the Grand Marshal of the Palace his serviette. The Chief Prefect, the Chief Equerry, and the Chief Chamberlain of the Empress performed similar offices for her. The Grand Almoner went in front of the table, blessed the repast, and withdrew. During the dinner the Grand Marshal of the Palace handed the wine to the Emperor. The sight was a magnificent one. To quote the *Moniteur*, "It is impossible to depict the imposing character imparted to such an assemblage by reason of its extraordinary magnificence. Neither pen nor pencil can give anything but a feeble representation of the majestic order, the admirable regularity, the blaze of

absence. All had had the happiness of gazing on the features of the Emperor and his august companion; all could even believe that they had been noticed, for the kindness and affability with which their homage was received by their Majesties were a noble recompense for the most fervent testimony of love and gratitude ever shown by a great nation to its Sovereigns."

Tuesday, the 3rd of April, was the day fixed for the presentation, at the Palace of the Tuileries, of the great bodies of the State to the Emperor and Empress seated on their thrones. The Emperor replied thus to the address from the Senate: "The Empress and I deserve the sentiments you have expressed by reason of the love we bear our people." The President of the Deputation from the Kingdom of Italy made his speech in Italian. "Our Italian people," replied the Emperor, "know how much we love them. As soon as possible the Empress and I will visit our good cities of Milan, Venice, and Bologna, in order to give fresh proofs of our love for our people of Italy."

The thirteen cardinals who on the previous day had absented themselves from the marriage of the Emperor, were in the Salle des Maréchaux where, together with the prelates, officers, functionaries, and ladies of the Court, they awaited the moment to pass before their formidable master. They had been waiting for three hours, a prey to deep anxiety, when an aide-de-camp

eyes in turn on the Champs Elysées, the Garde-Meuble, the Temple of Glory, the Palace of the Tuileries, and the Palace of the Corps Legislatif. This palace, the imaginary façade of which gave an idea of what the building would be when finished, on this occasion represented the Temple of Hymen. The transparency in front of it depicted Peace uniting the august couple. By their sides two Genii carried shields on which were emblazoned the arms of the two Empires. Behind this group were depicted magistrates, warriors, and the people presenting crowns, and at the two ends of the transparency, the Seine and the Danube, surrounded by children, the image of fruitfulness. The twelve Columns of the peristyle, the outside staircase, and the stone statues of Tully, l'Hôpital, Colbert, and d'Aguesseau, as well as those of Themis and Minerva, were resplendent. The Pont Louis XV., leading to the Place de la Concorde and the Temple of Hymen, resembled a triumphal avenue with its double row of flames, its coloured lamps, its obelisks, and its hundred luminous columns each surmounted by a star. The calm serenity of a lovely spring night was all in favour of the illuminations. The whole of Paris seemed like a vast ocean of brightness, whose every wave was light.

The *fête* continued far into the night. "All the families so gaily assembled," says the *Moniteur*, "returned to their peaceful firesides after a long

absence. All had had the happiness of gazing on the features of the Emperor and his august companion; all could even believe that they had been noticed, for the kindness and affability with which their homage was received by their Majesties were a noble recompense for the most fervent testimony of love and gratitude ever shown by a great nation to its Sovereigns."

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appeared bearing an order for them to withdraw, as the Emperor would not receive them. They departed in confusion, making their way to their carriages with difficulty through the crowded rooms. When the other cardinals, those who had been present at the marriage, presented themselves in the throne room, Napoleon stood up and gave utterance to the most virulent abuse of their expelled colleagues. The whilom Secretary of State of Pio VII., Cardinal Consalvi, was the especial object of his bitter recriminations. "The others," he exclaimed, "may perhaps be excused on account of their theological prejudices. He has offended me by his political principles. He is my enemy. He wishes to avenge himself because I turned him out of the Ministry. For that reason he has dared to spread before me a deliberate snare by holding out against my dynasty a pretext of illegitimacy—a pretext of which my enemies will not fail to make use as soon as my death has released them from the fear which now holds them back." In vain did the thirteen Cardinals write a collective letter of excuse, in which they declared that they never intended either to pass judgment on the validity of the first marriage of the Emperor, or to raise any doubts as to the legitimacy of the second. Napoleon showed himself implacable in regard to them. He deprived them of their offices; he forced them to take off their robes as Cardinals, and resume their habits of simple

ecclesiastics, which gave rise from that time to their being called the black Cardinals, to distinguish them from the others, or red Cardinals. He deprived them of all their property, ecclesiastical property and patrimony alike, and sequestered the whole of it. He interned them, two by two, in various towns of France, where they were under the surveillance of the police and lived on the charity of the faithful. The struggle against the Pope had fairly begun. But the Pontiff, conquered in the beginning, was not so in the end, and the persecutor of one day was the persecuted of the next. The captive of Savona and Fontainebleau was destined to re-enter the Eternal City in triumph, and the all-powerful Emperor, the gaoler of the Pope, was destined to die, a prisoner of the English, on the rock of St. Helena.

CHAPTER XV.

THE HONEYMOON.

NAPOLEON was happy. His new wife pleased him. He found her to be all he desired, sweet, good, timid, and modest. She was very well made, and would certainly bear him children. Being neither ambitious nor intriguing, she would not meddle with politics. She was religious, moral, and high principled. She would never oppose the husband whose slightest wish was her law. She would rally round him those of the French aristocracy who still held aloof. She would seal the fate of the cabals of the Faubourg Saint Germain. A bond of union between the past and the present, she brought not only to France, but to all Europe, stability and repose, and rendered the foundations of the Imperial edifice indestructible and irremovable. Of all the triumphs of the Emperor, this marriage seemed to be the most conspicuous. On

her side, Marie Louise congratulated herself on her new throne. Surrounded by the flower of society, having in her service the greatest names of the nobility of France, Belgium, and Italy, flattered by a Court in which, on the score of elegance, wit, and polished manners, the most brilliant traditions of the old *régime* were perpetuated, the daughter of the German Cæsars could not imagine that France, so tranquil, so respectful and so monarchical, where she seemed to be a goddess rather than a Sovereign, was the country where a few years previously the Jacobins had reigned supreme.

Marie Louise discovered that the Tuileries and Compiègne were more luxurious and brilliant than Burg and Schönbrunn. Modest though she was, the ingenious flattery and delicate homage paid her on all sides touched her. For her lady-in-waiting, the Duchess de Montebello, she conceived a sympathy which speedily developed into warm and sincere friendship.

Napoleon showered peculiar attentions on his young wife, and in his conjugal tenderness might be discovered a species of paternal protection. He was not yet forty-one. His face, lit up by success and glory, was far handsomer in middle age than it had been in youth. His manner, formerly brusque and almost violent, had become sensibly softened. The republican general had given place to a majestic monarch

familiar with all the usages of Courts and all the rules of etiquette, wearing his rank like a Louis XIV., and playing his part as Sovereign with all the ease and talent of a great actor. In the full tide of success in all his enterprises, never being contradicted by anybody, surrounded by people whose most earnest desire was to divine his wishes and to obey orders even before they received them, he had scarcely any further opportunity of giving way to those outbursts of anger, sometimes genuine but more generally assumed, which had formerly been habitual with him. He conversed freely, wittily, and continually, with an astonishing glow of language, and with an amount of charm and seductiveness against which nobody was proof. His dress, formerly neglected, had become elegant, and he imparted a certain sweetness, almost caressing, to his face and the sound of his voice. He did not seek merely to fascinate the young and pretty Empress, he made every effort to please her. Very much honoured and highly flattered in his vanity as a Corsican gentleman—for the man of Vendémiaire, the Saviour of the Convention, always had a weakness for titles and armorial bearings—he was as proud as he was happy in having as a companion a woman of so ancient and so illustrious a race, and this feeling of pride satisfied him and gave him an evenness of temper, serenity, and gaiety which charmed his courtiers, who were enchanted by the happiness of their master because they felt all the

beneficial effects of it. In this frame of mind Napoleon and Marie Louise left Saint Cloud on the 5th of April, 1810, for Compiègne, a residence which they quitted on the 27th of the same month for the purpose of making a triumphal tour together through the departments of the North.

In a word, the marriage took place under the very best auspices. At Vienna the satisfaction of the Emperor Francis was complete. Count Otto, the French Ambassador, wrote, on the 31st of March, 1810, the following despatch to the Duke de Cadore: "The 29th inst. was celebrated here by a general illumination and by a grand reception at Court, where his Majesty again received the congratulations of the Corps Diplomatique, the nobility, and foreigners. The Emperor seemed extremely satisfied; he spoke to me most warmly of the pleasure he felt, a pleasure shared in by all his subjects with but few exceptions. Both on entering and on leaving he conversed with me in the most obliging manner, and he dwelt especially on the signal service his Majesty had rendered to civilization by replacing France on a secure basis. He spoke in high praise of our army, adding that he had done all in his power to alleviate the lot of the large number of brave fellows who remained in hospital. 'In future,' continued the Emperor, 'we have only the same interest, that of working together for the repose of Europe and the progress of arts useful to

society. Everything can be set right except the loss of so many estimable men, killed or wounded in the recent war.' His Majesty having spoken to me before anybody else, his example was followed by his brothers." (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

The Emperor Francis was very glad to learn that his daughter was pleased with Napoleon and the French. The Ambassador of France in Vienna wrote to the Duke de Cadore on the 8th of April, 1810: "The letters which the Emperor and Empress of Austria have received from their Majesties have given them the greatest pleasure, especially those which were handed to them the evening before last by the Count de Praslin. The Emperor was moved to tears. The sentence, *We suit each other perfectly*, was a great success, and so were the two letters in German from the Empress, in which she says among other things: *I am as happy as possible; what my father told me so often has proved true; I find the Emperor extremely amiable.* In communicating these details to me Prince de Metternich wept for joy, and he threw himself on my neck and embraced me. The satisfaction of this Court is at its height, now that it is known that the august pair have seen each other and have inspired each other with mutual affection and confidence. (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

Count de Metternich having sent the Emperor

Francis very circumstantial details as to the truly splendid manner in which the marriage of Napoleon and Marie Louise had been celebrated, the Ambassador of France in Vienna thus describes the joy experienced by the Sovereign: "The Emperor of Austria to-day received very detailed accounts from Count de Metternich of all that had transpired in Paris up to the 5th of April, and he has informed me of his great satisfaction thereat. The unexampled honours paid to his daughter have touched him no less than the delicacy of the behaviour of H.M. the Emperor Napoleon. I am particularly charged to transmit to your Excellency the expression of his gratitude for the graciousness with which his Majesty was good enough to excuse the Empress from the ceremony of the first interview. By requesting the Princess to converse privately with Count de Metternich, his Majesty has also enchanted his father-in-law, who appreciates all the nobility of such a proceeding. The Empress said, in regard to this, that she was the happiest of women, and that she received from the Emperor not only the tenderest attentions, but also the care and instruction of an affectionate father. This account has drawn forth very sweet tears, and I cannot exaggerate to your Excellency the pleasure that is felt here, or the desire that it should be known in Paris. The Emperor of Austria is extremely flattered by the high distinction with which his Minister of Foreign Affairs (Metternich)

is treated in Paris, a distinction fully deserved by the latter by reason of his unwearying zeal and boundless devotion to the principles of the Alliance. His stay in France contributes materially to draw still closer the bonds which have been tied by the happiest probabilities." (Despatch of Count Otto, April 15, 1810. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

The celebrated Prince de Metternich, then only a Count, who had handed over to the Prince, his father, the interim charge of his Ministry at Vienna, intended first of all only to remain a month in Paris, but he was detained there nearly six. "I came," he says in his Memoirs, "not for the purpose of studying the past, but to endeavour to see into the future, and I was in a hurry to succeed. I remarked one day to Napoleon that my sojourn in Paris would not be of very long duration. 'Your Majesty,' I said to him, 'caused me to be led away as a prisoner in Austria; now I return to Paris free in regard to my person, but with important duties to fulfil. To-day, entrusted with immense responsibility, I am recalled by duty to Vienna. The Emperor Francis desired me to be present on the occasion of the entry of his daughter into France; I obeyed his orders, but I confess frankly to you that I have a more lofty ambition. I would fain discover what line to follow in the distant political future.'—'I understand you,' replied the Emperor; 'your wishes are in accord with mine. Stay here a

few weeks with us, and you shall have every satisfaction.'"

Very amiable and very fascinating, an accomplished man of the world, a consummate diplomatist, knowing France and the French perfectly, and standing very high in the confidence, I may say in the friendship, of Napoleon and all the Imperial family, Metternich occupied an absolutely privileged position at Court. "Napoleon," he says in another place in his Memoirs, "asked me one day why I never visited the Empress Marie Louise except on the occasions of her receptions or others more or less formal. I replied that I knew of no reasons to cause me to act otherwise, but that, on the contrary, I had very good ones for acting as I did. By placing myself," continues Metternich, "outside the ordinary rule in such matters I should be lending myself to gossip; I should be charged with having an eye to some intrigue or other, I should injure the Empress and go beyond my sphere. 'Bah,' interrupted Napoleon, 'I want you to see the Empress; go to her to-morrow morning, I will tell her to expect you.' On the following day I went to the Tuileries, and found Napoleon with the Empress. The conversation turned upon ordinary topics, when Napoleon said to me, 'I want the Empress to speak to you openly, and to confide to you what she thinks of her position; you are her friend, and she ought not to have any secrets from you.' As he finished this

sentence, Napoleon locked the door of the room, put the key in his pocket, and went out by another door. I asked the Empress what this scene meant, and she asked me the same question. Seeing that she had not been prepared for it in any way by Napoleon, I divined that he, no doubt, wished to put me in a position to gather from the mouth of the Empress satisfactory notions in regard to his domestic life in order that I might give a favourable account of them to the Emperor, her father. The Empress came to a similar conclusion. We remained shut up for more than an hour. When Napoleon again smilingly entered the room, he said to us, 'Well, have you had a long talk? Has the Empress abused me very much? Has she laughed or wept? I do not want to hear anything; there are secrets between you two which do not concern a third person, even though that third person be the husband.' He continued to converse in the same genial tone, and I took my leave. On the following day Napoleon made an opportunity of speaking to me. 'What did the Empress say to you yesterday?' he asked me. 'You told me,' I replied, 'that our conversation did not concern a third person, so allow me to keep the secret.' 'The Empress told you,' interrupted Napoleon, 'that she is happy with me, and has no complaint to make. I hope you will tell your Emperor so; he will believe you as he would not believe anybody else.'"

And, as a matter of fact, M. de Metternich did say so to the Emperor Francis, and the Emperor Francis believed M. de Metternich. We may as well add that he had every reason to believe him, because the Empress Marie Louise was then really happy, and in the sky destined to witness such terrible storms there was then no cloud.

We will close this chapter by transcribing a very curious letter which the Empress of Austria, the step-mother of Marie Louise, wrote to Napoleon on the 10th of April, 1810, and which displays in almost intimate terms the very favourable impressions of the Court of Vienna. "My brother, I cannot express to your Majesty the feelings of gratitude which I experienced on receiving your last letter, which filled me with joy by the assurance it gave me that you are satisfied with the child we confided to you. My maternal heart was all the more alive to it, because it was anxious about so interesting a result. But now, reassured by your Majesty, I have no further fear, and I give myself up with joy to the happiness of sharing that of my beloved daughter. She has written me in detail with touching sincerity, and she cannot repeat to me often enough how deeply her heart appreciates the tender attention of which she has been the object since her first interview with you. Her sole desire is to make the happiness of your Majesty, and I am bold enough to flatter myself that she will succeed, for I

have a thorough knowledge of her excellent disposition. Louise promises me that she will be very punctual in her correspondence, and this friendly interchange is some compensation to me for a loss which I keenly regret. It is so sweet to be able to converse with a cherished being, and I can truthfully affirm that I feel for her the tenderness of a mother, which she has won by her behaviour to me, seeing that she has always treated me as a true friend. Your Majesty is good enough to observe that your wife has spoken of me. I am not astonished, as I know her heart and my own, both extremely affectionate. But, to speak the truth, I cannot leave your Majesty in any error in regard to the pretended obligations of my dear Louise. I hope she will listen to the truth and deduct from it a result most advantageous to the candour of her soul! If I may take any credit to myself, it is for having sedulously preserved in her that candour which, while in the first instance it rendered her more timid in the eyes of the world, will deserve the esteem and the friendship of your Majesty.

"I may, perhaps, be reproached in that my daughter has but few ideas and little instruction. I admit it. But one learns to know the world and its dangers only too soon, and I frankly confess that as she was only eighteen, I preferred jealously to preserve her innocence, and I occupied myself solely in forming in

her a feeling heart, an upright mind, and clear ideas on the subjects with which she was acquainted. I have handed her over to your Majesty. As a mother I entreat you to be the friend and guide of my daughter, even as she is your most tender wife. She will be happy if your Majesty will allow her to come to you for advice on every occasion; for, I repeat, she is young, and not sufficiently hardened to avoid unaided the dangers of the world, and to play her part with discretion. But I am wearying your Majesty with so lengthy a letter. Please attribute it to the effusion of a maternal heart, which can never exhaust itself in words when the subject is the happiness of a dear daughter. I must, however, add one word. Your Majesty attaches too much importance to my readiness to please you by giving up the portrait of my dear Louise. I was too much interested in her pleasing you as soon as possible to avoid being somewhat egotistical on this point, but I shall highly appreciate the portrait she promises me. It will have the advantage of showing in her features the happiness she is experiencing."

It must be confessed that very rarely has a mother-in-law made use of more tender or more touching language. No letter could possibly have been more agreeable to Napoleon. It was not couched in official language, nor did it express formal compliments. It was sincere and really affectionate. In reading the

prose of the Empress of Austria, the conqueror of Wagram felt seriously that he had definitely entered the family of Kings. All that the amiable Sovereign said in regard to her step-daughter was true. There was in the whole personality of the young Empress of the French a candour, an ingenuity, and a freshness of mind and body which constituted the joy of her husband. Undoubtedly the sentiment with which she inspired him was not a romantic and ardent passion, such as he had formerly felt for his first wife, and Marie Louise, a northern beauty, had not the same attractiveness as Josephine, a seductive Creole. Napoleon assuredly would not have written his second wife the burning letters, in the tone of the Nouvelle-Héloïse, which he wrote to Josephine at the time of his first campaign in Italy. He had a less ardent love, but a greater esteem, for Marie Louise. He thought that after all the society of the Austrian Court was a better school for a woman than the society of the Directory, and he found in Marie Louise, a girl worthy of all respect, one inestimable blessing, a treasure such as a delicious but coquettish widow could not give—innocence.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TOUR IN THE NORTH.

NAPOLEON and Marie Louise left Compiègne on the 27th of April, 1810, at seven o'clock in the morning, for a trip through several departments of the North, which was one long ovation. Among their suite were the Grand Duke de Würzburg, brother of the Emperor of Austria, the Queen of Naples, the King and Queen of Westphalia, Prince Eugène de Beauharnais, the Prince de Schwarzenberg, and the Count de Metternich. "I was a witness," says the last-mentioned in his Memoirs, "of the enthusiasm with which the young Empress was everywhere received by the population. At Saint Quentin Napoleon formally expressed his desire that I should be present at an audience which he had granted the authorities of the town. 'I want to show you,' he added, 'how I am in the habit of speaking to these people.' I saw that the Emperor

is treated in Paris, a distinction fully deserved by the latter by reason of his unwearying zeal and boundless devotion to the principles of the Alliance. His stay in France contributes materially to draw still closer the bonds which have been tied by the happiest probabilities." (Despatch of Count Otto, April 15, 1810. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

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was bent upon showing me the extent and variety of his administrative knowledge."

To give any idea of the adulation of which Napoleon and Marie Louise were the objects, one must read the following passage from the Memoirs of M. de Bausset: "Their Majesties set out to visit several departments in the North in order to leave the City of Paris and the various State bodies time enough to prepare the *fêtes* which circumstances demanded. It was a triumphal march. The provinces welcomed the young and pretty Sovereign with acclamation. In the midst of all this brilliant homage one little village made itself remarkable by a triumphal arch on which were two most simple inscriptions. On the front were the words, *Pater Noster*, and on the back, *Ave Maria gratiâ plena*. The Priest and the Mayor came forward with offerings of wild flowers. Flattery could not present itself under a more favourable aspect." Consequently M. de Bausset saw nothing extraordinary in the Emperor being compared to the Eternal Father, and the Empress to the Holy Virgin! Was not that a sign of the times?

M. Thiers said in regard to this tour: "The people, tired of the monotony of life, always hastened to meet a passing prince, whoever he might be, and they frequently applauded him on the very eve of a catastrophe. When Napoleon appeared anywhere the feeling of curiosity and wonder sufficed to attract

the crowd, and at the moment when he had just completed his prodigious destiny by a marriage with an Archduchess, the excitement and enthusiasm must have been great. In fact, the rejoicings were loud and unanimous wherever he appeared."

Having left Compiègne on the 27th of April, the Emperor and Empress arrived the same day at Saint Quentin. The subterranean passage which unites the waters of the Seine with those of the Scheldt was illuminated, and Napoleon and all his Court passed through it in brilliantly decorated gondolas. On the 30th of April they embarked on the canal which starts from Brussels to join the Ruppel, and by the Ruppel the Scheldt. The Minister of Marine and Admiral Missiessy commanded the Imperial flotilla. When they arrived in sight of the squadron of Antwerp, a creation of Napoleon, all the men-of-war, frigates, corvettes, and gunboats drew up in line, and Marie Louise passed under the fire of a thousand guns, which all thundered in her honour. When the Sovereigns entered the town, the crowd of people was immense. "It expressed," said the *Moniteur*, "the gratitude of the inhabitants of that important city to its second founder. One could not help comparing the state of the port and town of Antwerp seven years ago, when his Majesty first visited it, with its present condition."

Their stay at Antwerp extended over seven days,

which the Emperor, on horseback at daybreak, employed in visiting the works of the harbour, the arsenal, and the fortifications, in holding reviews, and inspecting the fleet. On the 2nd of May a 24-gun ship, the largest vessel that had been built in the docks there, was launched. It was blessed by the Archbishop of Malines. To quote the Baron de Méneval: "The Empress was affable, simple, and unaffected. The recollection of the grace and ardent desire to please which Josephine displayed, was perhaps injurious to Marie Louise. Her reserve might have been attributed to the pride of the German dynasty, but it was nothing of the sort. Nobody could possibly have displayed more simplicity or less pride. Her natural timidity and the novelty of the part she was called upon to play alone gave her an apparent coldness. She so thoroughly identified herself with her new position, and was so touched by the regard and affection which the Emperor showed her, that when he proposed that she should remain at Antwerp during the trip he was going to make among the islands of Zealand, she begged him to take her with him unless he feared that the fatigue of the voyage would be too much for her." Napoleon therefore set out with her to visit Bois-le-Duc, Berg-op-Zoom, Bréda, Middelburg, Flushing, and the island of Walcheren, which the English had evacuated four months previously.

At Bréda Napoleon had a violent scene with a deputation of the Catholic clergy, whom he knew to be hostile to him. "Gentlemen," he exclaimed, "why are you not in your dress as priests? Are you lawyers, notaries, or doctors? Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's. The Pope is not Cæsar; I am. God has not handed the sceptre and the sword to the Pope, but to me. Ah! you do not want to pray for me? Is that because a Roman priest has excommunicated me? But who gave him the right to do so? Who here below can release subjects from their oath of allegiance to the Sovereign instituted by the law? Nobody, and you ought to know that full well. Give up the idea of putting me in a monastery, or of cutting off my head, as you did to Louis le Débonnaire, and submit yourselves, for I am Cæsar! If you do not I will banish you from my Empire, and I will scatter you like the Jews over the face of the earth. You belong to the diocese of Malines; go and present yourselves to your Bishop; take the oath at his hands; obey the Concordat, and I will then see what orders I shall have to give you."

After having visited the fortified places on the frontier, such as the islands of Tholen, Schouwen, North and South Beveland, and Walcheren, Napoleon still accompanied by Marie Louise, ascended the Scheldt once more, passed through Antwerp, showed himself at Brussels, spent three days at the Castle of

Laeken, and paid flying visits to the towns of Ghent, Bruges, Ostend, Dunkerque, Lille, Calais, Dieppe, Havre, and Rouen. On the 1st of June, 1810, the Sovereigns were back in the Palace of Saint Cloud. The Baron de Méneval tells us that Marie Louise was enchanted with the truly triumphal reception accorded to her during this trip. Received everywhere under triumphal arches, in the midst of *fêtes*, balls, illuminations, and popular enthusiasm and excitement, "she was enabled to appreciate the French character, and to judge how easily she could accustom herself to a country where the attachment borne to a Sovereign, the prodigious influence exercised by her, and the affection displayed for her—such as the people seemed to feel for her on account of the Emperor—made her hope for happy days."

Napoleon seemed to be master of the present and the future; even his military adversaries had become his courtiers. The most illustrious of them, the Archduke Charles, to whom he had just sent the Grand Cordon of the Legion of Honour, as well as the simple cross of a Chevalier, of more value still because he had won it himself, wrote to him: "Sire, the Ambassador of your Majesty has handed to me the decorations of the Legion of Honour, and the affectionate letter with which you have been good enough to honour me. Feeling deeply these distinguished signs of your kindness, I hasten to offer your Majesty the expression of

my gratitude, which is only equalled by the admiration inspired in me by your great qualities. The esteem of a great man is the best harvest of the field of honour, and I have always been zealous, sire, of meriting yours." (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

A still more curious circumstance is that the Bourbons of Spain themselves, the victims of the Bayonne trap, the Princes whom Napoleon had dispossessed, were in regard to him carried to the limits of adulation. Nowhere was the marriage of the Emperor and Marie Louise celebrated with more enthusiasm than at the Castle of Valençay, the residence of Ferdinand VII. The Spanish Prince had a *Te Deum* sung in the chapel there. He gave a banquet, at which he proposed this toast: "To the health of our august Sovereigns, the great Napoleon, and Marie Louise, his august spouse." In the evening there were splendid fireworks. He chose the moment when his subjects, exposing themselves to every peril and accepting every sacrifice in his name, were strenuously carrying on a war to the death against the French, to beg the Emperor Napoleon to adopt him as his son, and to grant him the honour of being allowed to appear at his Court.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MONTH OF JUNE, 1810.

THE month of June was entirely taken up with *fêtes*, each one more brilliant than its predecessor. Under the Empire things were never done by halves. Battles or *fêtes*, all were colossal. "Never," said Alfred de Musset, "were there so many sleepless nights as in the days of that man. Never was there such complete silence around those who spoke of death; and yet never was there so much joy, so much life, or so much warlike trumpeting in every Court. Never were there suns more pure than those which dried up all this blood. It was a saying that God made them for this man, and they were called the suns of Austerlitz. But he himself made them with his ever-thundering guns, which left no clouds except on the day following his battles."

The *fête* given to the Emperor and Empress by the city of Paris on the 10th of June was magnificent. On that day rejoicings took place in the capital. In

the afternoon the Champs Elysées were the scene of public plays; in the squares and side-alleys there were popular dances. The illuminations commenced at night-fall. A troupe of ballet-dancers on an immense stage performed a pantomimic ballet, entitled *L'Union de Mars et Flore*. The number of performers who took part in it amounted to five hundred. On all sides there were orchestras playing selections of music. A liberal distribution of provisions roused the crowd to exuberant joy. From the Arc de l'Etoile to the Tuileries, from the Tuileries to the Louvre, from the Louvre to the Hotel de Ville, the scene was fairylike. The procession of Napoleon and Marie Louise left the Castle of Saint Cloud at eight p.m., and drove along the appointed route by torch-light through a countless crowd. The approach of the Sovereigns was announced in the Capital by the sudden appearance of an aerostat covered with fireworks. At this moment loud cheers rent the air from the Arc de Triomphe as far as the Hotel de Ville. The procession reached that spot at half-past nine. There were nearly a thousand people in the Concert Hall, and nearly three thousand in the Salle des Fastes, the Salle de Saint Jean, and in the semi-circle formed on the square opposite the set fire-work piece on the left bank of the Seine, the signal for lighting which was given by Napoleon and Marie Louise. This set piece was divided into three parts—a military scene, the temple of Peace, and the temple

of Hymen. The first scene represented an attack on two forts, against which skirmishers advanced, throwing rockets to the sound of drum and trumpets. The forts discharged bombs and shells, which, before falling into the river, changed into luminous sheaves. The two forts, when captured, appeared enveloped in flames. Then the vessel, emblem of the city of Paris, made its appearance, and took up a position between the columns of light. The scene then changed, and the temple of Peace became visible, succeeded by the temple of Hymen, a real masterpiece of pyrotechnic art. After the fireworks the Sovereigns passed into the Salle des Fastes, and thence to the Concert Hall, where a cantata, composed by Méhul, with words by Arnault, was sung. After the cantata the ball commenced. Napoleon did not dance, but Marie Louise did. The first quadrille was made up as follows:—The Empress and the King of Westphalia; the Queen of Naples and the Vice-King of Italy; the Princess Pauline Borghèse and Prince Esterhazy; Mdlle. de Saint Gilles and M. de Nicoläi. The second quadrille was composed thus:—The Queen of Westphalia and Prince Borghèse; the Princess of Baden and Count de Metternich; the Princess Aldobrandini and M. de Montaran; Madame Blaque de Belair and M. Mallet. The Emperor left his throne and walked through the rooms, saying a word or two to a great many people. Towards midnight he retired with the Empress. At two o'clock

there was a supper, to which fifteen hundred ladies sat down, and the festivities did not terminate until dawn.

On the 14th of June the Princess Pauline Borghèse gave a most brilliant ball at the Castle of Neuilly. At the end of an illuminated grass-plot appeared the Austrian Palace of Laxenburg, and a ballet was danced by male and female performers dressed as peasants from the neighbourhood of Vienna. On the 21st of June there was another very splendid ball at the house of the Minister of War, the Duke de Feltre. But of all the *fêtes*, the most beautiful, the most original, and the most magnificent was that given by the Garde Impériale in the Champ de Mars and the École Militaire, then called the Quartier Napoleon. Marie Louise was literally enchanted by it. She declared that she had never seen anything so magnificent. Rome in the time of the Cæsars never witnessed such a dazzling sight. For several months previously the public had been watching the preparations for this *fête*, which were on a colossal scale. Two wings had been added to the École Militaire, which was large enough to hold 8,000 people. The principal court had been converted into a garden adorned with countless orange trees, shrubs, and flowers. The officers of the Garde, models of French gallantry, received the ladies at the entrance of the garden, offered each a bouquet, and conducted them to the galleries leading to the

two new buildings, the ball-room and the supper-room. The first room was in the shape of a tent, the top of which was ornamented with the signs of the Zodiac and an allegory representing a triumph. The throne was placed there at the top of seven rows of steps. All round the room, which was made for such an ovation, were muslin draperies with golden bees and branches of laurel and myrtle. When the Emperor and Empress appeared at seven o'clock in the evening three thousand ladies, each holding a bouquet, rose to their feet. It was like a living grove. The wives of the most illustrious warriors of the Garde, the Duchesses of Dalmatia, Trévise and Istria, the Countesses Walter, Dorsenne, Curial, Saint Sulpice, Lefebvre-Desnouettes, and Krasenstra, and the Baronesses Kirgener, Lubenska, Guiot, Gros, Delaistre, and Lepic, had been selected to serve as escort to the Empress. Marshal Bessières, Duke of Istria, offered her a most magnificent bouquet.

During this time the Champ de Mars, entirely covered in, sheltered from 3,000 to 4,000 spectators, grouped together without confusion or in convenience on the terrace, the amphitheatre, and the side walks. When Napoleon and Marie Louise appeared on the balcony of the École Militaire, an immense burst of cheering was heard. Afterwards there was a dinner given to the Imperial family. After this repast the Sovereign gave the signal for the horse and chariot

races. The intervening time was allotted to Franconi's circus troupe. When the prizes had been awarded to the winners of the various races, a balloon directed by a woman, Madame de Blanchard, was sent up. The bold aëronaut saluted the Sovereigns, waved a flag, threw down flowers, and reached an extraordinary height in a moment. The firework display then took place. While the rockets, bombs, and shooting stars were crossing and recrossing each other, two young and pretty women, who looked like magical apparitions, went up and down suspended ropes in the midst of the surrounding flames. After the fireworks a ballet was danced, under the direction of Gardel, by the male and female dancers of the opera, representing the various European nations with their national costumes. After the ballet there was a very animated ball. Napoleon and Marie Louise withdrew towards midnight, escorted to their carriage by the great majority of the guests, who cheered them and did not return to the ball-room until they had driven some distance away. Magnificent weather and a radiant night favoured this exceptional *fête*. The brightness of the moon and stars seemed to vie with the illuminations. The principal court, transformed into a *parterre* filled with shrubs and flowers, was like a garden of Armida, where the guests walked about to the sound of delicious music. At two o'clock in the morning the doors of the supper-room were

opened, and then were seen vast bowers of gilt trellis-work with Corinthian pillars, and a ceiling the frescoes of which represented groups of children playing in the open air with baskets of flowers and garlands. Fifteen hundred people sat down to supper.

The Garde Impériale might well be proud of their *fête.* Young, brilliant, lovers of pleasure and glory, the officers then led a life all the more joyous because war caused it to run the risk of being short. They had the same ardour and dashing enthusiasm in the ball-room as on the field of battle. They loved the perfume of flowers as much as the smell of powder. They had a passion for every description of conquest, and revived the manners of ancient chivalry. To use the language of the day, it was the two-fold reign of Mars and Venus. In those heroic times, courage was held in far higher esteem than riches. Venality was the exception among pretty women. They thought a scar no drawback to a warlike countenance, and the disinterested favours of beauty were the reward of bravery.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BALL AT THE AUSTRIAN EMBASSY.

THE series of magnificent *fêtes* just celebrated in Paris was brought to a close by a ball which the Prince de Schwarzenberg, the Austrian Ambassador, gave on the 1st of July, 1810, to the Emperor and Empress at the Embassy, and which was announced in advance as going to be a marvel of luxury, elegance, and good taste. The residence of the Prince Ambassador was situated in the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. It was the old abode of the Marquise de Montesson, widow of the Duke d'Orleans, to whom that lady had been morganatically married. Great preparations had been made with extraordinary magnificence. The ground floor of the house not being sufficiently large, a spacious ball-room had been made of wood, which was connected with the rooms by a gallery also of wood. The ceiling of this gallery, panelled in varnished paper, was decorated with ornaments and pictures.

Raised to the level of the rooms, the floors of these two additions rested on beams. An enormous chandelier hung from the ceiling of the ball-room. The two sides and extent of the gallery were lighted by lustres fixed against the walls. A high dais was reserved for the Imperial family in the middle of the right side of the ball-room, and facing a large door opening on to the garden. Behind this dais a small doorway had been opened for the private use of the Sovereigns. The Ambassador had with him, besides his wife, his brother and his sister-in-law, Prince Joseph and Princess Pauline de Schwarzenberg, who were to assist him in doing the honours of the *fête*.

Napoleon and Marie Louise, who came from St. Cloud, arrived at the barrier of Paris at a quarter to ten. There they changed carriages. Shortly after ten o'clock they reached the doors of the Embassy, where they were received by the Ambassador. The Emperor wore over his coat the Grand Austrian Order of St. Stephen.

The *fête* commenced. It was splendid. Their Majesties, who were received with strains of music, traversed the concert-room, and passed into the garden, where they halted for a moment before a temple of Apollo. Female vocalists, personifying the Muses, sang a joyous chorus. Napoleon and Marie Louise walked down the waterfall alley, where a mysterious harmony was heard out of a subterranean

grotto, reached an arbour of vines ornamented with mirrors, monograms, flowers, and garlands, listened there to vocal and instrumental concerts, the one German and the other French, then resumed their walk in the garden, halted once more before a Temple of Glory, where four magnificent women represented victory, the Muse Clio, and Fame, where trumpets sounded, songs of triumph burst forth, and perfumes were burning in golden tripods, and then were present at a charming ballet danced on a grass-plot, from which there was a view of the park of Laxenburg, that spot so dear to Marie Louise. Then they betook themselves to the wooden gallery newly constructed in front of the Embassy, on the side of the garden, and finally reached the grand ball-room, which was capable of holding nearly fifteen hundred people.

It was midnight, and up to that hour everything had passed off perfectly. The Sovereigns appeared enchanted with the *fête*. The Ambassador was radiant. Everybody was in ecstasies over the magic of so wonderful a spectacle. The ball opened with a quadrille, in which the Queen of Naples danced with Prince Esterhazy, and Prince Eugéne de Beauharnais with Princess Pauline de Schwarzenberg. When the quadrille was over the Emperor descended from his throne in order to make a tour of the room, while the Empress, the Queen of Westphalia, the Queen of Naples, and the Vice-Queen of Italy, remained in their

places on the dais. Napoleon had just passed by Princess Pauline de Schwarzenberg, who had presented to him the young Princesses, her daughters, when suddenly the flame of a candle caught the curtains of a window. The Count Dumanoir, Chamberlain of the Emperor, and several officers endeavoured to tear down the curtains, but the flames spread, and in less than three minutes the conflagration, like a train of powder, reached the ceiling of the room, and the fragile decorations with which it was ornamented. The Count de Metternich, who was at the foot of the dais, at once ascended the steps in order to warn the Empress of what was happening, and persuade her to follow him as soon as such a thing was possible. As for the Emperor, as self-possessed as on the battle-field, he contrived to reach the dais, rejoin Marie Louise, and withdraw with her into the garden, at the same time exhorting everybody to remain cool so as to obviate any confusion.

Fortunately, the exits from the ball-room were spacious, and the majority of the guests were enabled to escape by the garden. But, alas! how many accidents and victims there were! An *écossaise* was being danced when the fire broke out. Many young ladies had left their mothers in order to dance. The mothers were anxious to rejoin them, and they were as anxiously looking for their mothers. Fearful shrieks resounded on all sides. The tumult was at its height. Ladies

were calling their husbands, parents their children. The officers of the Imperial Guard pressed round Napoleon and drew their swords, for, on the spur of the moment, the idea of treason crossed their minds, and they were in readiness for the outburst of some sort of infernal plot. The Prince de Schwarzenberg, who never left the Emperor, said to him, "I know the construction of this room. It is lost, but there are so many exits that nobody need run any risk. Sire, I will cover you with my body." Still followed by the Ambassador, Napoleon, without the faintest display of fear, reached the dais, took the Empress by the hand, and succeeded in getting out with her. The pair crossed the garden, got into a carriage, and went as far as the Place Louis XV. Then they separated, and while the Empress returned to Saint Cloud, the Emperor retraced his steps and reached the Austrian Embassy again, where he hoped to assist in arresting the progress of the conflagration.

The Ambassador, who had accompanied Napoleon and Marie Louise as far as their carriage, returned to his residence. What a spectacle of desolation! What distressing scenes! What an abyss of anguish and grief! The sky was overcast with a storm. The wind howled violently in and about the frail edifice, which was enveloped in a few moments. The Queen of Westphalia, who had fainted, was saved by M. de Metternich. The Queen of Naples, Prince Eugène,

and his wife, who was six months advanced in pregnancy, had remained on the dais. The Queen wished to attempt to escape by the large door, the same through which the Emperor and Empress had left. But she was speedily so engulfed in the crowd that, as she was almost at the end of it, she would certainly have been reached by the flames, as several other people were, had it not been for the assistance of the Grand Duke de Würzburg and Marshal Moncey, who seized hold of her and took her out. Prince Eugène, seeing the lustres in the ball-room falling, and being in consequence prevented from crossing it, fortunately noticed a small door leading to the main rooms of the building, and through it he escaped with his wife.

The Ambassador, in despair, contemplated the catastrophe as if stupified. His wife, who had lost consciousness, but had been spared by the flames, was being carried out. What was the sight that met his eyes? His brother, Prince Joseph de Schwarzenberg, running hither and thither, overwhelmed with anxiety and grief. Prince Joseph was looking everywhere for his wife, Princess Pauline de Schwarzenberg, and he found her not. What had become of the unhappy mother? When the fire broke out, her eldest daughter, Eleonore, being already out of reach of danger, she had hastened to the rescue of her second daughter, called Pauline after herself, who was dancing the *écossaise* when the disaster occurred. She took her hastily

as far as the steps of the entrance, where the crowd was at its densest in the midst of the flames. One moment more and mother and daughter would have been saved. They had only a few steps more to go to reach the staircase, and then the garden. But at this point a fallen beam suddenly separated the mother from her daughter, and the staircase crushed beneath its weight a number of people who were attempting to escape. Seeing then that her daughter was no longer by her side, the courageous Princess once more rushed into the room. What had become of her? Nobody knew. Cruel uncertainty, full of anguish! The manly countenance of the Ambassador was bathed in tears.

Napoleon returned to the Embassy. Directing everything, superintending everything, as was his wont in warfare, he remained there more than two hours, now exposed to a drenching rain which had set in during the fire, and now to all the effects of heat and smoke. Alone and unattended, and evidently intent on preventing any wrongful interpretation being attached to an event, the dismal character of which would not prevent the malevolent from making sinister remarks about it, he displayed conspicuous energy and coolness.

The Emperor did not return to the Castle of Saint Cloud until nearly four o'clock in the morning. He was expected there with the greatest impatience. "After the Empress arrived," we read in the Memoirs of the

and his wife, who was six months advanced in pregnancy, had remained on the dais. The Queen wished to attempt to escape by the large door, the same through which the Emperor and Empress had left. But she was speedily so engulfed in the crowd that, as she was almost at the end of it, she would certainly have been reached by the flames, as several other people were, had it not been for the assistance of the Grand Duke de Würzburg and Marshal Moncey, who seized hold of her and took her out. Prince Eugène, seeing the lustres in the ball-room falling, and being in consequence prevented from crossing it, fortunately noticed a small door leading to the main rooms of the building, and through it he escaped with his wife.

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On the day following the fateful ball, Napoleon in the early morning sent his pages to ask for news. The reply was disastrous. The Princess de la Leyen had succumbed to her wounds. The lives of General Touzart, his wife, and daughter, were despaired of, and in fact they died during the day. Prince Kourakin, the Russian Ambassador, was severely hurt. Having slipped on the steps leading from the ball-room to the garden, he had fallen unconscious into the midst of the flames, which fortunately glanced over his coat of cloth of gold and the decorations covering it, as if from a cuirass. He was ill for some months afterwards. "Prince Joseph de Schwarzenberg," said the *Moniteur* of the 3rd of July, 1810, "spent the night in looking for his wife, who was neither with his brother the Ambassador, nor with Madame de Metternich. He still refused to believe in any misfortune having happened to her when, at daybreak, a disfigured body was found in the ball-room, which Dr. Gall identified as that of the Princess Pauline Schwarzenberg. All doubt on the subject was removed by the identification of her jewels, and the monograms of her children, which she wore round her neck. Princess Pauline Schwarzenberg was the daughter of Senator d'Arenberg; she was the mother of eight children, and four months advanced in pregnancy. She was as remarkable for her personal beauty as for her qualities of heart and mind. The act of devotion which cost her her life

proves how worthy she is of regret, for death was inevitable; the flames were bursting forth as if in whirlpools. A mother alone was capable of confronting such a danger."

The *Moniteur* added to this pathetic account: "During the whole of the night the Ambassador of Austria displayed the care, activity, calm, and presence of mind that might have been expected of him. The officers of his Embassy and his nation gave the most signal proofs of their courage and devotion. The public felt most kindly disposed towards the Ambassador when they saw him accompany the Emperor and Empress to their carriage, forgetting the dangers to which his own family were exposed. The Emperor left at 3 a.m. During the remainder of the night he sent several times to inquire after the fate of Princess Pauline de Schwarzenberg. Only at 5 a.m. did the news of her death reach him. His Majesty, who entertained a particular esteem for this Princess, regrets her extremely. The Empress displayed the greatest calmness throughout the evening. When on awaking this morning she heard of the death of Princess Pauline Schwarzenberg, she shed copious tears."

The young Princess Pauline, the daughter of the victim, was for a long time in a state which caused the greatest anxiety in regard to her life. The death of her mother was concealed from her, but, anxious on account of her absence, she looked anxiously at the

traces of grief on her father's face, which he endeavoured to hide from her. She recovered eventually. Afterwards, when married to Prince de Schœnberg, her half-healed wounds reopened, and thus she perished, after the lapse of some years, a victim, like her mother, of the disastrous *fête.*

On the day following the ball Marie Louise wrote a letter to her father in German, in which she said: "I did not lose my head. Prince de Schwarzenberg conducted us, the Emperor and myself, out of his house through the garden. I am all the more grateful to him for it because he left his wife and child in the middle of the burning room. The panic and confusion were frightful. If the Grand Duke of Würzburg had not carried the Queen of Naples away, she would have been burnt alive. My sister-in-law, Catherine, who thought her husband was in the midst of the flames, fell senseless. The Vice-King had to carry the Vice-Queen out. I had not a single one of my ladies or officers near me. General Lauriston, who adores his wife, was calling aloud in the most lamentable manner, and hindered us in our flight. I was, however, quieter then than when I saw the Emperor start again for the fire. We stayed awake with Caroline until four o'clock in the morning. We then saw him come back again, wet through with the rain. The Duchess de Rovigo, my Lady of the Palace, is much hurt. The Countesses Bucholz and Lœwenstein, Ladies-in-Waiting

to the Queen of Westphalia, are equally so. Lauriston had his hair and forehead burnt in saving his wife. Prince Kourakin, who was very badly hurt, lost consciousness. He was trampled under foot during the panic, and was taken away half dead. Prince de Metternich escaped almost without a scratch. Princess Charles Schwarzenberg, who would not go away until everybody else had left, was severely burnt. Princess Pauline Schwarzenberg has not yet been found. The poor Ambassador is beside himself, although he was not responsible for the catastrophe."

Marie Louise, who had interrupted her letter, resumed it thus: "I have just seen the Emperor, from whom I have heard terrible news. Princess Pauline Schwarzenberg has been found burnt to death. The diamonds of her necklace were scattered round her. She wore round her neck a heart of brilliants, on which were inscribed the names of her two daughters, Eleonore and Pauline. It was by this jewel that she was recognised. She leaves eight children and was pregnant. The family are inconsolable. Kourakin is very ill, as is also Madame Durosnel, the wife of a General. I am so upset that I cannot move."

The Emperor Francis wrote to his son-in-law on the subject of the fatal *fête*: "July 15. My brother and very dear son-in-law, With the most lively satisfaction I have learnt that your Majesty and my dear daughter, the Empress, were speedily removed out of

the range of the sad accidents which happened at the *fête* given by my Ambassador, the Prince de Schwarzenberg. I cannot tell you how sensible I am of the marks of interest you were good enough to show him on that occasion, and of your personal efforts, as noble as they were courageous, to arrest the progress of such a disaster. The Count de Metternich and Prince de Schwarzenberg cannot find words warm enough to express their profound gratitude for so much goodness and anxiety, and I pray your Majesty to receive the expression of all I felt when reading their reports." (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

The ball at the Austrian Embassy produced a deep feeling of sadness. The resemblance of the calamity which overshadowed the *fêtes* on the occasion of the marriage of Marie Antoinette forty years previously, came into every mind. This ball, followed without any warning by a horrible catastrophe, the magnificent room crumbling into ruins, the burning *debris*—were they not all presages? Was not the great Empire to give way in the same manner? And that fire which suddenly burst forth amid a night of rejoicing and triumph—was not that a herald of that far more terrible fire, the burning of Moscow? But nations forget. Sombre presentiments nearly always disappear rapidly. The Empire was then so glorious that a passing storm did not seem to trouble the radiant serenity of the Imperial star. A few days

after the catastrophe it was no longer remembered. All the world, even the enemies of France, allowed themselves to be fascinated by the prodigious brilliancy of the fortune of a man whose existence was the strangest and most miraculous ever enshrouded in a romance.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PREGNANCY OF THE EMPRESS.

NAPOLEON and Marie Louise became more and more attached to each other. The Empress wrote to her father: "I assure you, dear papa, that the Emperor has been much calumniated. The more intimately one sees him, the more one appreciates and loves him." The satisfaction felt by Napoleon was still more keen when he was assured that his young wife was pregnant. He redoubled his care, attention, and forethought for her, never reproaching her, and never addressing her except in terms of praise or tenderness. The following passage from the Memoirs of the Prince de Metternich proves how anxious the Emperor was at this juncture to prevent his companion being crossed in any way: "In the summer of the year 1810," says the celebrated Minister, "Napoleon one day asked me to stay after his levée at St. Cloud.

When we were alone, he told me in an embarrassed tone of voice that I could render him a service. 'It concerns the Empress,' he said; 'she is young and inexperienced, and she does not yet know the customs of this country or the disposition of the French people. I have placed the Duchess de Montebello by her side; she is just what is required, but she is occasionally careless. Yesterday, for example, when walking in the Park with the Empress, she presented one of her cousins to her. The Empress spoke to him, and she was wrong. If she allows young people and cousins to be presented to her she will speedily become a prey to intrigue. Everybody in France invariably has a favour to ask. The Empress will be besieged, and without being able to do good will be exposed to a thousand annoyances.' I told Napoleon that I shared his views, but that I did not quite understand his motive in making me the recipient of his confidence. 'Simply,' said Napoleon to me, 'because I wish you to speak to the Empress on the subject.' I expressed my surprise that he did not undertake the task himself. 'The advice,' I said to him, 'is good and prudent, and the Empress is too clever not to appreciate it.' 'I prefer,' interrupted Napoleon, 'that you should undertake the task. The Empress is young and might suppose that I wanted to play the morose husband; you are her father's Minister and the friend of her childhood, and what you would say

would make more impression upon her than anything I could tell her.'"

Napoleon displayed the greatest regard, not only for his wife, but also for his father-in-law, of whom he never spoke except in terms of the warmest sympathy. When, before returning to Vienna, M. de Metternich had a farewell audience at Saint Cloud towards the end of the month of September, 1810, Napoleon begged him to convey to the Emperor Francis the most positive assurance of his friendship and attachment. "Let the Emperor rest assured," he said, "that I am anxious only for his happiness and prosperity. Let him put aside all idea of encroachment on his Monarchy on my part. It ought to increase, and quickly, through our alliance. Assure him that whatever is said to the contrary is false. I prefer him on the throne of Austria to any of my brothers, and I no longer see any ground for difference between us."

In the beginning of July the doctors were still doubtful as to whether the Empress was pregnant, but there was great hope that she was so, and Marie Louise wrote to her father : "God grant that it may be true! The Emperor will be so happy." On the 27th of July, the matter being almost a certainty, she wrote again to her father : "I can assure you, dear papa, that I am not in the least afraid of the event, which will be such great happiness." On the 15th of August the doctors announced positively that the young Sovereign was in

an interesting condition. One of them addressed her in Latin verse, ending with the following line from Virgil :—

"Jam nova progenies cælo dimittitur alto."

The official notification of the pregnancy was, however, not made until November. Napoleon sent the Baron de Mesgrigny to Vienna, where he arrived on the 22nd of November, bearing two letters, one from the Emperor and the other from the Empress, for the Emperor Francis. "This letter, dear papa," said Marie Louise in hers, "is to tell you of my pregnancy. I take this opportunity of asking your blessing upon me and upon your little grand-son or grand-daughter. You can imagine my joy. It would be complete if the birth brought you to Paris." The thought of seeing her father soon was constantly in the mind of the Empress. Napoleon was careful to nourish this hope, and she wrote to her father : "My husband often speaks to me of you, and he is very desirous of seeing you again."

The Emperor Francis replied to his son-in-law as follows on the 3rd of December, 1810 : "My brother and very dear son-in-law,—The letter which M. de Mesgrigny handed me from your Majesty has filled me with the most earnest joy. The happy event which it announced is shared in by me to its fullest extent. I am very sincere in my good wishes for you, my brother, and I look upon the pregnancy of the Empress as

being so closely connected with our reciprocal satisfaction that, both as a friend and a father, I cannot but attach the greatest importance to the news you have given me. All that your Majesty says about your domestic happiness is confirmed by my daughter. You cannot, my brother, contribute more directly to mine. I knew the excellent qualities of my child when I confided her to you, and your Imperial Majesty cannot fail to recognise that the only compensation to me for an existence apart from her is to be found in her happiness, inseparable from that of her husband. I beg your Majesty to accept my congratulations." (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

Napoleon requested the Archbishops and Bishops to offer up special prayers for the Empress. On the 2nd of January, the anniversary of the Coronation and the battle of Austerlitz, he gave audience to the Senate, who came to thank him for having notified to them the pregnancy of the Sovereign. On that day a Mass and *Te Deum* were sung, and there was a theatrical performance at the Tuileries, which was illuminated. Twelve young girls, dowered by the Empress, were led to the altar by the Mayors in the parish church, and alms were distributed in abundance.

The Emperor inaugurated a charitable Maternity Society, the object of which was to afford assistance to poor women during childbirth. The Empress was named Protectress of this Society, which had Mesdames de

Ségur and de Pastorel as Vice-Presidents, and was composed of a thousand *dames brévetées*, fifteen *dames dignitaires*, a Grand Council sitting in Paris, Administrative Councils sitting in the Provinces, a Secretary-General who was the Grand Almoner, and a Treasurer-General. The funds of the Society were 100,000 francs in the Funds, provided by the *Domaine Extraordinaire*, and by voluntary subscriptions, which at once reached the required total.

New Year's Day drew near, and Marie Louise wanted a set of Brazilian rubies, the price of which was 46,000 francs. As she wanted to make her sisters a few presents, the cost of which would have amounted to 25,000 francs, she saw that she would only have about 15,000 francs left to provide for her expenses for December. She therefore gave up all idea of the rubies, not wishing to mention such a thing to the Emperor. Napoleon, who heard of the matter by accident, was delighted at the spirit of order and wisdom displayed by his companion, and he rewarded her in the most delicate manner. He gave a secret order to the Crown jeweller for a set of rubies like the former ones, but of the value of from 300,000 to 400,000 francs, and sent them as a surprise to his wife, who was much touched by this mark of attention. He at the same time asked her if she had thought of sending any New Year's presents to her sisters, the Archduchesses. She replied that she had already

thought of doing so, and that she had ordered for the young Princesses jewels to the value of about 25,000 francs. As Napoleon thought that rather shabby, she replied that the Archduchesses were not so spoiled as she was, and that the presents would seem superb in their eyes. The Emperor then made Marie Louise a present of 100,000 francs.

In the month of January, 1811, the Emperor of Austria thus thanked Napoleon for having sent him a portrait of the Empress, his daughter :—

"My brother,—The delicate manner in which your Imperial Majesty has fulfilled my wishes in sending me the portrait of the Empress, your dear wife, adds a new value to the lines you have just addressed to me. I hasten to express to you the sweet joy I experience in beholding once more the features of my dear child which to a perfect likeness seem to unite the advantage of indicating the happiness she enjoys in her blissful union." (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

The Countess of Montesquiou, a lady of the most distinguished merit, was appointed Governess of the Children of France, with Mesdames de Mesgrigny and de Boubers as under-Governesses, to whom was added subsequently a third, Madame Soufflot. A pretty and robust woman, married to a carpenter of Fontainebleau, was chosen as nurse, and two little beds were prepared, a blue one for a prince, and a pink one for a

princess. The *layette*, valued at 300,000 francs, was the admiration of all the ladies of the Court.

In the months of January and February, 1811, Marie Louise, in spite of her advanced state of pregnancy, continued to take part in amusements. She was present in her carriage at the hunt in the Bois de Vincennes and the forest of Saint Germain, and at the shooting parties at Versailles. She took walks in the Bois de Boulogne with Napoleon. Towards the middle of February the preparations for the confinement began. The *accoucheur* Dubois took up his residence in the Tuileries in the apartments of the Grand Marshal of the Palace. The Duchess de Montebello, Lady-in-Waiting, also took up her residence in the Palace. Marie Louise, who went on the 10th of February to a fancy-dress ball given by the Duchess de Rovigo, was present on the 25th at a private ball given in her own rooms at the Tuileries, to which two foreigners only were invited, the Prince de Schwarzenberg, the Austrian Ambassador, and Prince Leopold of Coburg.

On the 5th of March Count Frochot, Prefect of the Seine, went at the head of the Municipal Council to the Tuileries to offer, in the name of the City of Paris, a magnificent cradle in silver gilt, representing a ship, the emblem of the great capital. This cradle, a veritable master-piece, designed by the painter Prudhon, is now in the Imperial Treasury of Vienna,

to which the King of Rome presented it when he became Duke de Reichstadt. The ornaments, in mother-of-pearl and silver, stood out from a ground of orange velvet. It was supported by four cornucopiæ, near which were placed the genii of Strength and Justice, and was made of mother-of-pearl, studded with bees in gold. At the top was a shield bearing the monogram of the Emperor, and surrounded by a triple row of ivy leaves and laurels. A small figure representing Glory stretching over the world upheld a crown, in the middle of which shone the star of Napoleon. A young eagle, placed at the foot of the cradle, fixed his eyes on the star of the conqueror. His wings were half-opened, as if preparing for flight. A curtain of lace, ornamented with stars and with a rich embroidery on gold, fell on the edge of the cradle.

The hour of her confinement drew near, and Marie Louise only walked on the terrace by the edge of the water which ran along the whole length of the gardens of the Tuileries. To render the access to this terrace easier for the Empress, a small door with an iron gate had been opened from the ground floor of the Castle. The crowd pressed round the gate, and when they saw the young Sovereign pass they gave utterance to their good wishes with respectful tenderness. The first pains of Marie Louise began on the evening of the 19th of March. Napoleon was on the eve of having a son.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

THE BIRTH OF THE KING OF ROME.

At nine o'clock in the evening of the 19th of March, 1811, the Empress Marie Louise, after a favourable pregnancy, felt the first pains of childbirth. The great bell of Notre Dame and the bells of all the churches rang to summon the faithful, who prayed all night, invoking the blessing of God on the Sovereign and the child about to see the light. Marie Louise had with her, in addition to M. Dubois, the *accoucheur*, the Duchess de Montebello, her lady-in-waiting, the Countess de Luçay, her lady of the bedchamber, two of her first ladies, Mesdames Durand and Ballant, two attendants and the nurse, Madame Blaise. The Emperor, his mother, his sisters, and two doctors,

MM. Corvisart and Bourdier, remained in the adjoining room. Napoleon frequently went into his wife's room and encouraged her with cheering and tender words. The pangs, which had been weak throughout the night, disappeared altogether at five o'clock in the morning, and Dr. Dubois came to the conclusion that the confinement of the Empress was not immediately at hand. Then the Emperor dismissed the Princesses, and, wearied by emotion and watching, he went and had a bath. The Empress slept for nearly an hour. Suddenly she was seized with violent pains in quick succession. Dr. Dubois went in search of Napoleon. He was trembling in every limb because he had just perceived that the delivery would be very difficult on account of the child being sideways. Suddenly opening the door of the Emperor's room, where he was having his bath, he told him frankly that the preliminaries of the confinement were not satisfactory, and that he feared he should not be able to save both mother and child. "Come, come," replied Napoleon, "do not lose your head, M. Dubois, save the mother, only think of the mother. Imagine that you are attending the wife of a shop-keeper in the Rue Saint Denis; you cannot do more than you can, and in any case, I repeat, save the mother first. I will follow you." Then, getting hastily out of his bath and putting on a dressing-gown, he went to the bedside of Marie Louise, who was suffering intensely. He turned

pale. Never on any field of battle had he experienced such emotion. He nevertheless endeavoured to conceal his anguish, and kissed his wife tenderly, saying a few reassuring words to her at the same time. But, unable to restrain himself any longer, and fearful of communicating his alarm to his wife, who was in too great trouble already, he went to the door of the adjoining room, and there, listening for the least sound, pale as death, and trembling from head to foot, he spent a quarter of an hour a prey to inexpressible anxiety. During this time Marie Louise, perceiving that the *accoucheur* was preparing to use instruments, was struck with terror, and exclaimed, "Because I am an Empress is it any reason why I should be sacrificed?" Madame de Montesquiou, who was holding her head, then said to her, "Courage, Madame, I have gone through it myself; I assure you that your precious life is in no danger." The labour lasted twenty-six minutes, and could not have been more painful. The child presented itself feet foremost, and it was with the greatest difficulty that the head was released. At last, at twenty minutes past nine in the morning, it was born, but it was believed to be dead as for seven minutes it gave no sign of life. The Emperor, who had hastened to the bedside of Marie Louise, kissed her affectionately. The mother alone engrossed his attention. He dared not look in the direction of the child. He had made up his mind to

utter no complaint provided the Empress was saved. But, oh! happiness, oh! protection of Providence! A few drops of brandy were put in the mouth of the young prince; he was lightly patted with the palm of the hand all over the body; he was covered with warm napkins; he lived, he uttered a cry! Napoleon, full of joy, kissed the new-born infant. The thought that he had a son transported him. Never had any of his triumphs so delighted him. "Well, gentlemen," he said, as he went back to his room, "we have a fine vigorous boy. He required some praying for before he came, but at last he is here." And then he added, with profound tenderness, "My dear wife! How courageous she was! And how she suffered! I would rather have no more children than see her suffer so again."

During this time what was going on in Paris? The inhabitants had been on the watch since the previous evening. Everybody was speculating with curiosity as to whether the child that Marie Louise was about to bring into the world would be a boy or a girl. If it should be a boy it would have a very sounding title. In accordance with the decree which had conferred the position of second town of the French Empire upon the Eternal City, now merely the chief town of a Department—the Deparment of the Tiber—and in imitation of the ancient customs of the German Empire, in virtue of which the prince destined to succeed the

Germanic Cæsar was called King of the Romans before he attained to the title of Emperor, the son of Napoleon would be called King of Rome. But would Napoleon have a son? Would his star be radiant enough for him to receive this fresh blessing from Heaven which would put the finishing touch to his unheard-of prosperity? Such was the subject of every conversation, in the most sumptuous mansion as well as in the humblest cottage. On the 20th of March, from daybreak, the garden of the Tuileries was filled with an immense crowd of individuals of all ages and conditions. The courts and quays were crowded. In the garden, along the terrace facing the Palace, a cord had been stretched from the gate of the Pont Royal to the Pavillon de l'Horloge. The crowd was so afraid of disturbing the Empress by approaching too near, that this frail barrier, this simple cord, was more respected than if it had been a high wall. The spectators, whose numbers had been increasing ever since six o'clock in the morning, stopped of their own accord at some distance from the cord, and each one spoke with bated breath. They waited with extreme impatience, restrained by respect, for the moment when the guns of the Invalides should be heard. If the child should be a girl twenty-one rounds only would be fired. If a boy the number of rounds would be a hundred and one. The windows of the houses opened. In the squares and streets everything,

pedestrians, horses, and carriages, had come to a standstill. The first gun was heard from the Invalides. And now the immense crowd, profoundly moved, set to work to count, in a low tone at first, but afterwards somewhat louder, each report—one, two, three, four, and so on to the twentieth round. Then the excitement redoubled. In a second it would be known if there was a King of Rome. The twenty-first gun was heard. Would the salute stop? No. The salvoes continued. The twenty-second round was fired, and so on to the one hundred and first. But there was no necessity to count. Napoleon was father of a son! Then the enthusiasm of the crowd burst forth like a volcano. Cheers, hats thrown into the air, shouts of joy, boisterous and unanimous rejoicing reigned everywhere—what a sight for the Emperor, who, behind the curtain of one of the windows of the Empress' room, silently contemplated the delirium of his people. Great tears coursed down the conqueror's cheeks. "Glory had never caused him to shed a single tear," said his valet, Constant, "but the happiness of being a father had softened that soul which the most brilliant victories and the most sincere tokens of public admiration scarcely seemed to touch. And, indeed, if Napoleon ever had reason to believe in his fortune, it was on that day when the Austrian Archduchess made him the father of a King—he, who had commenced by being the younger son of a Corsican

family. In a few hours the event which France and Europe awaited had become a private source of rejoicing in every household."

At half-past ten in the morning the aëronaut, Madame Blanchard, ascended in a balloon from the Champ de Mars in order to throw down from aloft papers announcing the great news. The telegraph, whose cabalistic signs no fog had interrupted—for the day was bright, the air mild, and the sun befitting spring—was set in motion in every direction. By two o'clock in the afternoon answers had been received from Lyons, Brussels, Antwerp, Brest, and several other large towns of the Empire. All, as may easily be imagined, expressed the most hearty enthusiasm. Napoleon wrote during the day to his father-in-law to inform him of the auspicious event: "This is a good letter," he said; "I have never signed a better." The officers of the Emperor's household, pages and couriers were despatched with letters and messages to the great bodies of the State, the large towns, and the French and foreign Ministers and Ambassadors. The Empress Josephine was not forgotten; Napoleon sent a page to her to the Castle of Navarre, in Normandy.

On the very day of his birth the King of Rome was privately baptized in the chapel of the Tuileries. Surrounded by his family and his Court, the Emperor took up his position in the middle of the chapel, in a

chair surmounted by a canopy and with a *prie-Dieu.* Between the altar and the rails, on a block of granite covered with a piece of white velvet, a superb silver gilt vase had been placed which served as the baptismal font. When Napoleon advanced to present his son for baptism there was a moment of religious silence which contrasted with the boisterous gaiety of the immense crowd which had hastened from every point of the capital in the direction of the Tuileries for the purpose of seeing the fireworks and the illuminations, which were magnificent. "The houses," we read in the Memoirs of Constant, "had been spontaneously illuminated. Those who sought to discover from external appearances what were the thoughts of the people amid events of this kind remarked that the top stories of the houses in the suburbs were as brilliantly lighted as the most sumptuous residences in the capital. The public buildings which, under other circumstances, thanks to the obscurity of the adjacent houses, would have been remarkable, were scarcely noticeable amid the profusion of lights which public recognition had illuminated at every window. The watermen gave an impromptu *fête* on the river which lasted during a portion of the night, and was witnessed by a huge crowd on the banks with every demonstration of rejoicing. The population which had passed through so many revulsions of feeling during thirty years, and had celebrated so many victories, was as enthusiastic as if

it was welcoming a first *fête* or a happy change in its destiny."

On the 22nd of March Napoleon gave audience to the great bodies of the State in the Throne-room of the Tuileries.

"Your people," said the President of the Senate to him, "salute with unanimous acclamation the new star which has just risen on the horizon of France, and whose first ray dismisses into obscurity the shadow of the future."

When one remembers how this young star was destined to fade, how the King of Rome was destined to be deprived not only of his titles of Prince Imperial and King, but also of his Christian name, Napoleon, and his family name, Bonaparte, and that he was to be known merely as Francis, Duke de Reichstadt, and to be buried in the church of the Capucines at Vienna in Austrian uniform, it is impossible to avoid smiling sadly at the childish optimism of Courts! In 1811 illusions reigned supreme. "In the midst of our triumphs," said General de Ségur, "and when even our enemies, resigned at last, appeared to have submitted, nay, even attached themselves to the fortune of our Emperor, where was any cause for gloom, or why weary oneself in anticipating either a total or partial eclipse? It was so pleasant to give ourselves up to this star! It dazzled us, it was so lofty and so radiant, it had worked so many wonders! And how many of

us, in spite of the perpetual variations of our French sky, when they sometimes contemplated its serenity, were tempted to believe it unchangeable, and were day after day surprised by a stormy transformation, sudden and unexpected! Who among us, when he suddenly hears of the end of a being whom he has left in the full enjoyment of health, does not protest in astonishment that this mortal should be dead, to borrow the expression of the greatest of the great orators of our great literary century? Such were we, and much more so on the 20th March, 1811, when, as we were more and more swollen with pride, Heaven, in order to render our fall more complete and unexpected, completed the fairy structure and crowned the illusion by the birth of the King of Rome." Napoleon, in the enjoyment of every happiness and triumph, had reached the summit of the mountain of glory and prosperity. He was destined speedily to descend by a steep and toilsome path, at the bottom of which was the inevitable abyss, an abyss filled with tears and blood.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHURCHING.

MARIE LOUISE recovered very quickly from her confinement. Morally and physically she was in perfect health, and the joy of her husband alone equalled hers. Her father, the Emperor of Austria, associated himself very sincerely with her happiness. He wrote to Napoleon on the 27th of March, 1811: "My dear brother and son-in-law,—It is impossible for me to express to your Imperial Majesty in a formal letter the satisfaction which the safe delivery of my dear daughter has given me. Your Majesty must be too fully persuaded of the lively interest I take in an event so important both for you and for France as the birth of a prince, not to be convinced that the certainty of knowing that the confinement of my daughter is safely over can alone increase my joy. May Heaven preserve this new pledge of the bonds that unite us. There could be nothing more precious

or more fitting to cement for ever the very happy relations that exist between our two Empires." (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

On the 20th of March Napoleon sent the Count de Nicolaï to Vienna, where he arrived on the 28th. On that day the Emperor Francis wrote to his son-in-law: "My brother and dear son-in-law,—The Count de Nicolaï has this moment handed me the two letters which your Imperial Majesty was good enough to entrust to him. Not wishing to delay the departure of a courier who is ready to start, and will convey to your Majesty and the Empress the first expressions of my joy at the happy event which occupies our thoughts, I refrain from replying in official form to your Majesty's invitation that I should hold your son at the baptismal font; I, however, lose no time in letting you know that I accept with the most entire satisfaction a function so dear to my heart.

"The letter in which your Majesty forwarded the details of the confinement of my dear daughter excited my most lively interest. It furnished me with such ample proof of the care which your Majesty devotes to a wife who repays you with affection as justly deserved as it is undivided, that it could not but have assured you beforehand of my entire gratitude. I thank you all the more, my brother, for not having withheld from me any of the details of the confinement of the Empress. I know her sufficiently well to

water, and was cheered by the crowd. On the following day Prince Clary, sent from Vienna by the Emperor of Austria, was received. Napoleon expatiated at length on the courage, virtues, goodness, excellent education, exquisite tact, and perfect dignity of the Empress. "In a word," he added, "she is appreciated by everybody." On the same day, the 18th of April, the Empress drove in the Bois de Boulogne, and was present at a reception of the Corps Diplomatique, who congratulated her. The churching took place on the following day, the 19th, in the chapel of the Tuileries. The Prince de Rohan officiated.

Marie Louise went with the Emperor on the 21st of April to Saint Cloud, whence, two days subsequently, she wrote a letter to her father, of which M. de Helfert gives the German text. The following is a translation: "My dear father,—You may imagine my immense happiness. I could never have believed that I could experience such joy. My affection for my husband has increased, if such a thing was possible, since the birth of this son. I am still moved to tears when I think of all the marks of tenderness he has shown me. These marks would attach me to him even if I had not been already so by reason of all his good qualities. He charges me to speak of him to you. He frequently asks after you. He says to me, 'Your father must be very happy to have a grandson.'

be sure that if her sufferings were great, the happiness of having fulfilled the wishes of your Majesty and those of your people entirely compensates her. I have the conviction that the presence of your Majesty gave her strength to bear her pain, and encouraged her *accoucheur* not to allow himself to be alarmed by unforeseen circumstances. Your Majesty has already so much right to my friendship that these details would assuredly not be necessary to influence me to cherish more and more closely every day the bonds which unite us, and which I charge my daughter and her son to cement still more closely." (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

The health of Marie Louise and the King of Rome was perfect. In order to satisfy the eagerness of the crowd which thronged incessantly at the gates of the Palace of the Tuileries in search of news of the Empress and the little Prince, it was at first decided that one of the Chamberlains should remain from morning until evening in the first room of the grand suite of apartments in order to receive all persons who might call, and acquaint them with the bulletins which the Emperor's physicians issued twice a day. But that ceased in a very short time, and there were no more bulletins, mother and child progressing most favourably. On the 6th of April Marie Louise got up, and wrote half-a-dozen lines to her father. On the 17th she took a walk on the terrace by the

water, and was cheered by the crowd. On the following day Prince Clary, sent from Vienna by the Emperor of Austria, was received. Napoleon expatiated at length on the courage, virtues, goodness, excellent education, exquisite tact, and perfect dignity of the Empress. "In a word," he added, "she is appreciated by everybody." On the same day, the 18th of April, the Empress drove in the Bois de Boulogne, and was present at a reception of the Corps Diplomatique, who congratulated her. The churching took place on the following day, the 19th, in the chapel of the Tuileries. The Prince de Rohan officiated.

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When I tell him that you already love the child he is delighted. I am sending you the portrait of my boy. You will find, no doubt, a likeness in him to the Emperor. He is very strong for five weeks old. When he came into the world he weighed nine pounds. He is very well made, and spends the whole day in the garden. The Emperor takes very much notice of his son. He carries him in his arms, plays with him, and tries to make him eat, but does not succeed. You will have already learnt from my uncle's letter that I suffered for twenty-two hours. My sufferings were beyond imagination, but my joy at being a mother made me forget them speedily. The baptism is fixed for the month of June. I am sorry that your affairs will not allow of your being present. Please God you may be able to come soon! I heard with joy from Prince Clary that you are well. I hope God will hear my prayers, and that dear mamma will soon be cured. You may imagine how many questions I asked about you, for to speak of you and your goodness is my greatest happiness."

The return of fine weather induced Napoleon to spend a few days with the Empress at Rambouillet to enjoy a little hunting. In this residence, more simple and less spacious than the other Imperial palaces, the Emperor was, so to speak, at home. He arrived there on the 13th and left on the 22nd to undertake a tour in Normandy. Marie Louise pleaded so earnestly that he finally decided to take her with him. The

Departments of Calvados and La Manche gave him an enthusiastic welcome. The Emperor signalised his stay at Caen by favours and acts of benevolence. Several young men belonging to good families were appointed to sublieutenancies; 130,000 francs were devoted to charity. The Emperor and Empress went from Caen to Cherbourg to visit the works in progress on the harbour, which was to be completed in a rock of granite fifty feet below the surface of the water.

"What rejoicings!" says General de Ségur in his Memoirs in connection with this trip. "What rejoicings! What admiration! How Napoleon's pride must have enjoyed it, if we may judge by our own satisfaction at receiving the homage which the honour of being the old and intimate surroundings of the great man attracted to us! I saw Cherbourg for the first time. This port, one merely of refuge as designed by Louis XVI., has been transformed by Napoleon into an undertaking destined to assume the offensive. In these days of wonders, however little one may be inclined to astonishment, this bay, which superhuman effort has wrested from the depth and fury of the ocean, and the aspect of that vast basin, dug fifty feet deep in granite, for fifty men-of-war, for their construction and repair, and for the batteries for their defence, filled me with admiration such as I felt when I saw for the first time in the great Alps the gigantic works of Nature!"

On the day following his arrival at Cherbourg,

Napoleon rode out very early in the morning, visited the heights above the town, and went on board several ships. The next day he held various Councils and visited all the naval establishments; then he went down to the bottom of the basin excavated in the rock, a basin intended for the reception of line-of-battle ships, and to be covered eventually with fifty-five feet of water, "During our stay," M. de Bausset tells us, "the Emperor wished to breakfast on the pier or jetty commenced under the unhappy reign of the most virtuous of kings. I arrived in the most brilliant weather in advance of their Majesties, and arranged everything. The table was placed facing the sea; the English vessels could be plainly seen in the distant horizon; most assuredly they were very far from suspecting the presence of Napoleon. There was, moreover, a formidable battery on this pier to protect the lovely roadstead and the port. I do not think our neighbours would have been tempted to come and salute us at close quarters even if they had been better informed. At a signal given by the Emperor, the squadron, which was lying ready for sea in the roadstead, and was composed of three men-of-war under the command of Vice-Admiral Troude, advanced majestically with every sail set, and slowly made the tour of the pier on which we were. The Admiral's ship approached as near as possible to the pier, and he himself came in the launch to fetch their

Majesties and suite. He took us on board amidst vociferous cheering from the crews, who were in full dress. While the Empress and the ladies with her were resting in the Ward-room, Napoleon went below and inspected the ship; at the moment when we least expected it he ordered a general and simultaneous discharge of all her guns. During the whole course of my life I never heard such a row; I thought the vessel was being blown into the air."

Napoleon and Marie Louise returned to Saint Cloud on the 4th, of June, 1811. The Empress, who was then looking very beautiful, and whose face was rendered even still more lovely by happiness, had fitly responded to the marks of general enthusiasm by her gracious reception of the authorities and people of the Departments.

It would be difficult to imagine all the adulation which was at this epoch showered on the Imperial couple. In every language of Europe, English alone excepted, poems were written on the birth of the King of Rome. There was a regular avalanche of poems, odes, and epistles. In less than a week the Emperor received more than two thousand. He probably read but few of these hyperbolical compositions in which every laudatory formula and all the allegories of the Grecian mythology were exhausted. A sum of 100,000 francs was distributed among the numerous authors of this official poetry. "Of all the curiosities

of this kind, the most extraordinary which flattery ever conceived," says Madame Durand, "was a collection of French and Latin verses, entitled *L'Hymen et la Naissance*, printed in the Imperial press, which the University was obliged to send out for distribution as prizes to the pupils of the four Lycées of the capital and those in the provinces, so as to cover the cost quickly. Among this insignificant rubbish are to be found the names of all the writers who, after the fall of the colossus, basely insulted his remains and burnt their incense before the new god who replaced him."

The *Moniteur* expresses itself thus in its issue of the 9th of June, 1811, the day of the baptism of the King of Rome: "The happy event which, at the moment when we write, is on every spot of this vast Empire the subject of thanksgiving rendered to the Divinity by a grateful people; which is inspiring songs of joy in our temples, our public places, our peaceful towns, our fertile plains, and the camps of our invincible warriors; which has fulfilled at one and the same time the wishes of the people for the happiness of their Sovereign, and those of the Sovereign for the consolidation of the institutions he has consecrated to the prosperity of his people—ought more than anything else to rouse the fervour of our poets and impart noble and living inspiration to them. None of them, however, has attempted to conceal the difficulty of the

undertaking; all have been compelled to recognise that the greatest effort would be necessary, not only to rise to the height of a subject whose grandeur is its first danger, but even to tune their lyres to the tone of the enthusiasm which animates us, an enthusiasm whose powerful voice, bursting forth in France and spreading throughout Europe, is in itself the sweetest hymn of poetry and the most harmonious concert. But such an obstacle has not discouraged their muse; admiration, gratitude, and love are happy inspirers; our poets have felt their influence; in the language one puts in the mouths of the gods they have faithfully translated the language of the people."

CHAPTER III.

THE BAPTISM.

THE baptism of the King of Rome was celebrated with great pomp on Sunday, the 7th of June, 1811, in the metropolitan church of Notre Dame. The *fête* commenced on the previous evening. At seven o'clock Napoleon, Marie Louise, and their son arrived from Saint Cloud followed by a magnificent *cortège*. The courtyard of the Palace, the garden, and the terraces were filled with spectators who cheered lustily. In every theatre there was on the same day a free performance, and couplets written for the occasion were warmly applauded. Paris was illuminated, and provisions were distributed among the people in all the public places. The fountains ran with wine, and everywhere everybody drank to the health of the little King and his happy parents.

On the following day the ceremony of baptism took place at seven o'clock in the evening. From two

o'clock in the afternoon regiments of the line and the Garde Impériale formed a double line from the Tuileries to Notre Dame. A large number of buildings and private houses were hung with tapestry, or covered with flowers and emblems.

At four o'clock the Senate started from the Luxembourg, the Council of State from the Tuileries, and the Court of Cassation, the Court of Accounts, and the Council of the University from their respective places of assembly. From the Hotel de Ville emerged the Prefect of the Seine, the Mayors, the Municipal Council of Paris, and the Mayors and Deputies of the forty-nine loyal towns of the Empire. The story goes that the Mayor of Rome and the Mayor of Hamburg —two of the loyal towns—found themselves side by side, and as they took their places each said to the other: "Good day, neighbour!"

In front of the façade of Notre Dame a large entrance had been constructed in the shape of a tent, upheld by columns and ornamented with draperies and garlands. The interior of the Cathedral, brilliantly lighted, was very richly draped. The right hand seats of the choir were reserved for foreign Princes, the left for the Corps Diplomatique; the body for the wives of the Ministers and Grand Officers of the Crown, and the households of the Imperial family; the sanctuary for the twenty Cardinals, and the hundred Archbishops and Bishops; the choir for the

Senate, the Council of State, and the Mayors and Deputies of the forty-nine loyal towns ; the upper part of the nave for the civil and military authorities ; and the rest of the nave and the galleries for persons who had received invitations.

At five p.m. the cavalry of the Garde, who headed the procession, moved off. But we will leave the description to the *Moniteur*, ever lyrical and enthusiastic whether the Prince to be baptised was Imperial or Royal. "At half-past five," says the official organ, "the guns, which since the previous evening had been heard at intervals, announced the departure of their Majesties from the Tuileries, accompanied and followed in conformity with the programme of the ceremonial. For the first time every eye was turned on the august child whose royal name was about to be consecrated under the auspices of religion. The effect which the sight of him produced on every mind is inexpressible. '*Vive le Roi de Rome !*' was the uninterrupted shout as the procession moved along the appointed route. Their Majesties were greeted with the same cry, with which their august names mingled in every mouth with an accent of love, respect, and gratitude. They appeared sensible of this twofold homage, which really was only one, and they deigned to give the most touching evidences of it to the crowd who thronged their passage."

Shortly before seven o'clock in the evening the Im-

perial procession arrived before Notre Dame. The Sovereigns were received at the door of the Cathedral by the Cardinal Grand Almoner, who handed them the holy water. Then the procession moved on in the following order :—Ushers, Heralds of arms, the Chief Herald at Arms, Pages, Assistant Director of Ceremonies, Orderly officers on duty, Masters of the ceremonies, Prefects of the Palace on duty, Officers on duty in attendance on the King of Rome, Ordinary and Extraordinary Equerries of the Emperor on duty, Ordinary and Extraordinary Chamberlains on duty, Equerries of the day, Chamberlains of the day, the Chief Equerry, Grand Eagles of the Legion of Honour, Grand Officers of the Empire, Ministers, the Grand Chamberlain, the Grand Equerry and Grand Master of Ceremonies, the honours of the child, viz., the taper, carried by the Princess de Neuchâtel; the chrisom-cloth, carried by the Princess Aldobrandini; the salt-cellar, carried by the Countess de Beauvau; the honours of the godfather and godmothers, viz., the basin, carried by the Duchess d'Alberg; the ewer, carried by the Countess Vilain XIV.; the napkin, carried by the Duchess of Dalmatia; before the King of Rome, on the right, the Grand Duke of Würzburg, representing the Emperor of Austria, godfather; on the left, the mother of Napoleon, godmother; and Queen Hortense, representing the Queen of Naples, second godmother; the King of Rome, carried by his gover-

ness, and clothed in a robe of silver tissue lined with ermine, having right and left of him his two assistant governesses and his nurse; the train of his robe borne by Marshal the Duke de Valmy; the Empress under a canopy borne by canons, the train of her Majesty's robe being borne by her Chief Equerry; the Lady-in-Waiting, the Lady of the Bedchamber, the Lord-in-Waiting, and the Grand Almoner to the right and left of the canopy; behind the canopy, the Princess Pauline, the train of whose robe was borne by an officer of her household; the ladies of the Palace; Cambacérès, Duke of Parma, Arch-Chancellor of the Empire; Marshal Berthier, Prince de Neuchâtel and Wagram, Vice-Constable; Talleyrand, Prince of Bénévent, Vice Grand Elector; Prince Borghèse, Duke of Guastalla; Prince Eugène Beauharnais, Vice-King of Italy; the Hereditary Grand Duke of Frankfort; Prince Joseph Napoleon, King of Spain; Prince Jérome Napoleon, King of Westphalia; the Emperor, under a canopy, borne by canons; to the right and left of the canopy the aides-de-camp of the Sovereign; behind the canopy the Colonel-General of the Guard on duty; the Grand Marshal of the Palace; the Chief Almoner; the Ladies-in-Waiting to the Princesses; and the ladies and officers on duty in attendance on the Imperial Highnesses.

When the entire party had been put in their proper places, each one according to his rank, the Grand

Almoner intoned the *Veni Creator*, and the governess having taken the King of Rome to the gateway of the Choir, the ceremony took place. As soon as the Imperial child was baptized, the governess placed him in the arms of the Empress; the Chief Herald-at-Arms advanced to the centre of the Choir and proclaimed thrice, *Vive le Roi de Rome!* Applause, which up to that moment had been restrained out of respect to the solemnity of the ceremony and the sanctity of the place, broke out from all sides. While the applause resounded throughout the building, Marie Louise, standing, held the child in her arms. The Emperor then took him and held him up so that he might be seen by those present.

We must here quote M. Thiers, the striking spectacle of the baptism of the King of Rome having inspired him to write the following truly eloquent passage: "How profound is the mystery which surrounds human life! What a sad surprise it would have been if, behind this scene of prosperity and grandeur, there could have been suddenly seen so many ruins, so much blood and fire, and the flames of Moscow, and the ice of Berezina, and Leipsic, Fontainebleau, Elba, Saint Helena, and finally the death of that august child when only twenty years of age, in exile, without one single one of the crowns then accumulated on his head, and so many other revolutions destined to raise up his family after having beaten

with the little basins in the form of shells, and nine fountains from which the water spouted through masks; the lawn, grass-plots, and thickets shining in the fantastic light of Bengal fire. At nine o'clock in the evening Madame Blanchard, the intrepid aëronaut, the amazon of the air, ascended in a balloon and lighted the fireworks arranged round her car in the form of a crown of stars suspended at an immense height. She looked like a magician in a burning car. A set piece was then lighted by the artillery of the Garde Impériale. Placed in the middle of the Plaine de Boulogne, it could be seen from Paris as well as from Saint Cloud, and from the high ground bordering on the Seine from Calvaire as far as Meudon. To an elegant colonnade succeeded a luminous garden whose cascades, trees, and porticoes presented a radiant *ensemble.* The Emperor and Empress went everywhere throughout the park. Optical illusions and dioramas recalling to Marie Louise reminiscences of her dear Austria, of Schönbrunn, Burg, and Laxenburg presented enchanting spectacles. A number of orchestras, dispersed among the trees, played waltzes which were danced by the ballet from the opera, dressed as German shepherds and shepherdesses. An interlude, *La Fête du Village*, composed by Etienne, and set to music by Nicolo, was represented in the open air on a stage of verdure. When the Empress arrived in front of a column surmounted by a basket of

epoch our history will be neither more nor less than one long mourning."

Napoleon and Marie Louise arrived at the Hôtel de Ville at eight o'clock in the evening. The Prefect of the Seine, after having addressed them, conducted them to the room set apart for them, and there the Emperor received four series of presentations. Then the Grand Marshal of the Palace informed him that the repast was served. The Imperial banquet was arranged as follows:—In the centre of the table, the Emperor; on his left, the Empress, the Queen of Holland, the Princess Borghèse, the Grand Duke of Würzburg, and the Grand Duke of Frankfort; on his right, his mother, the King of Spain, the King of Westphalia, Prince Borghèse, and the King of Italy. The table was on a dais. A canopy was placed over the chairs of the Emperor and Empress. The ladies of the Palace and those comprising the Imperial *cortège* were placed below the platform and facing the table. The waiting was done by the Officers of the Household of the Emperor. The decoration of the room consisted of the arms of the forty-nine loyal towns, Paris, Rouen, and Amsterdam being the first three, and the remainder in alphabetical order. After the banquet the Sovereigns proceeded to the Salle des Fastes, where a concert was given in which was sung a cantata called *Le Chant d'Ossian*, the words by Arnault and the music by Méhul. Then, after having conversed

and with it he protected her Majesty. The Count de Rémusat also found one, and for a whole hour he journeyed from palace to park, and from park to palace, escorting as many ladies as he could to the shelter of the rooms. The *fête* could not possibly go on. Everybody was wet through to the skin. The musicians could get no sound out of their instruments, the rain having either broken or stretched the strings. The Emperor and Empress retired at eleven o'clock, and neither the Court nor the people had any pleasant memories of the *fête* which began so well and ended so badly. Superstitious and evil-disposed persons discovered a presage of evil in it; they recalled, in connection with it, the fatal ball at the Austrian Embassy, and noticed that the storm had burst just as the palace of the King of Rome was being illuminated. But what mattered a shower of rain in a country accustomed to torrents of blood?

On the 15th of August, 1811, the *fête* of the great and small Napoleon was celebrated at Saint Cloud and in Paris, as well as throughout the Empire, with great brilliancy. On the 25th of August the *fête* of Marie Louise was celebrated at the two Trianons, filled with reminiscences of Louis XIV. and Marie Antoinette. The Grand Trianon, so graceful and so majestic, although it consisted of but one story, and the Petit Trianon, although it formed a simple square of scanty dimensions and was scarcely royal in appearance, were

King. This procession of cars was preceded by the giant, the whale, the man-of-war, Neptune's chariot, Europa's chariot, and other allegories called, in the language of the country, *den grooten hommegang*.

At Rome, the city of the Imperial child, the *fêtes* had commenced on the 8th of June at night, heralded by salutes from the guns of the flotilla of Civita Vecchia, which had ascended the Tiber, all the ships being gaily decked with flags. The Capitol, the Forum, the Coliseum, the arches of Septimus and Constantine, the temples of Concord, Peace, Antoninus and Faustina, and the column of Jupiter Stator were brilliantly illuminated. On the morning of the 9th all the authorities proceeded to the Cathedral of St. Peter to hear the *Te Deum* sung by an immense multitude. During the day there was horse racing, and in the evening an illumination of the dome of St. Peter and the entire colonnade, as well as fireworks from the fort St. Ange. The Rome of the Cæsars and the Popes, the Eternal City, celebrated the baptismal day of its little King after a striking fashion.

CHAPTER IV.

SAINT CLOUD AND TRIANON.

THE Emperor thought that there could not be too many *fêtes* on the occasion of the baptism of his son. He gave one on the 23rd of June, 1811, in the Palace and park of Saint Cloud. The Palace with its magnificent rooms of Mars, Venus, Truth, Mercury, Aurora, and Diana, and the Apollo gallery, embellished by frescoes by Mignard; the park with the beauty of its trees, the magic of its perspectives, the freshness of its lawns, and the abundance of its flowers; the two superb views to be seen from the Palace windows, one over Paris and the other over the garden; the cascades framed in tasteful architecture, whose waters fell from ledge to ledge, boiling in white foam, and sparkling with a thousand reflections under the rays of the sun and the sheen of the lights—all this formed a marvellous theatre for a *fête* either by night or by day. More than 300,000 people

betook themselves to Saint Cloud; they arrived in continuous streams from early morn, and spread themselves about in the park and avenues, and took up positions on every height. There were also distributions of provisions. Wine streamed from several fountains. There were innumerable games and theatrical spectacles of all kinds, and the Garde Impériale had prepared on the level ground a huge banquet at which they entertained the garrison of Paris.

At six o'clock in the evening Napoleon and Marie Louise, without either guard or escort, drove in an open carriage in the park to the great enjoyment of the crowd, who cheered them heartily. The Orangery, the boxes of which decorated the front of the Palace, was adorned with rich hangings. Temples and kiosks had been erected in all the thickets. At nightfall six launches, illuminated and manned by marines of the Garde Impériale, executed various evolutions, and let off fireworks whose many-coloured fires were reflected in the Seine. During this time the illuminations began to mark out the graceful outlines of the park, the terraces, the amphitheatre, and the Palace. The whole scene was like fairyland; the grand cascade with its recumbent statues representing the Seine and the Loire; the lower cascade, situated at the fall of the grand one, the pit of which was cast twenty-seven feet from the ground; the large square basin, ornamented

with the little basins in the form of shells, and nine fountains from which the water spouted through masks; the lawn, grass-plots, and thickets shining in the fantastic light of Bengal fire. At nine o'clock in the evening Madame Blanchard, the intrepid aëronaut, the amazon of the air, ascended in a balloon and lighted the fireworks arranged round her car in the form of a crown of stars suspended at an immense height. She looked like a magician in a burning car. A set piece was then lighted by the artillery of the Garde Impériale. Placed in the middle of the Plaine de Boulogne, it could be seen from Paris as well as from Saint Cloud, and from the high ground bordering on the Seine from Calvaire as far as Meudon. To an elegant colonnade succeeded a luminous garden whose cascades, trees, and porticoes presented a radiant *ensemble.* The Emperor and Empress went everywhere throughout the park. Optical illusions and dioramas recalling to Marie Louise reminiscences of her dear Austria, of Schönbrunn, Burg, and Laxenburg presented enchanting spectacles. A number of orchestras, dispersed among the trees, played waltzes which were danced by the ballet from the opera, dressed as German shepherds and shepherdesses. An interlude, *La Fête du Village,* composed by Etienne, and set to music by Nicolo, was represented in the open air on a stage of verdure. When the Empress arrived in front of a column surmounted by a basket of

flowers, a dove flew down to her feet and presented an ingenious device to her.

The weather had held up pretty well throughout the day, but in the evening it became stormy; there were neither moon nor stars. The representation of a palace projected for the King of Rome, facing the grand cascade, had just been illuminated—the palace which the Emperor wished to build on the heights of Chaillot with the Bois de Boulogne for a park. Suddenly a storm, which had been slowly coming up, burst over the heads of the countless crowd who were strolling about in the walks. There were there deputations from all the large towns of the immense Empire which extended from Rome to Cuxhaven. The men wore rich velvet coats, and the women cloaks of embroidered silk. The Emperor at that particular moment was chatting on the threshold of the door of the room which communicated with the garden. Beside him was the Mayor of Lyons. "Monsieur le Maire," he said to him, "I am going to benefit your manufactures." So saying, he remained standing in the middle of the doorway. The courtiers, with bare heads, received the inundation smilingly. Perhaps some of them might have said that, like the rain of Marly, the rain of Saint Cloud wet nobody.

As might have been expected, nobody, unfortunately, had an umbrella. Prince Aldobrandini, Chief Equerry to the Empress, was fortunate enough to procure one,

and with it he protected her Majesty. The Count de Rémusat also found one, and for a whole hour he journeyed from palace to park, and from park to palace, escorting as many ladies as he could to the shelter of the rooms. The *fête* could not possibly go on. Everybody was wet through to the skin. The musicians could get no sound out of their instruments, the rain having either broken or stretched the strings. The Emperor and Empress retired at eleven o'clock, and neither the Court nor the people had any pleasant memories of the *fête* which began so well and ended so badly. Superstitious and evil-disposed persons discovered a presage of evil in it; they recalled, in connection with it, the fatal ball at the Austrian Embassy, and noticed that the storm had burst just as the palace of the King of Rome was being illuminated. But what mattered a shower of rain in a country accustomed to torrents of blood?

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converted into enchanted palaces on the occasion of the *fête* of Marie Louise. The two castles, the belvidere, the small lakes, the temple of Love, the hamlet, the octagonal pavilion, and the theatre—all were radiant. It might have been supposed that Marie Antoinette had risen from the dead.

Twenty-two years had not elapsed since Marie Antoinette had been there, and many noble lords and ladies, who in 1811 shone at the Court of Napoleon, after having graced that of Louis XVI., witnessed with emotion that fairylike resurrection of the prosperous days of the old *régime*. How the old French nobility must have reflected as they looked at that Petit Trianon which called up so many reminiscences! Eighteen years had not elapsed since the day when there perished on the scaffold the charming Sovereign who had been the idol, the goddess of that little temple, and already other rejoicings were taking place there, and another Austrian, another Archduchess, occupied the place of the martyr Queen. There was the hamlet of which Louis XVI. was the miller, the Count de Provence the schoolmaster, the Count d'Artois the keeper—the hamlet with the mill with its merry sound, the dairy where cream was placed in porphyry bowls on marble tables; the washhouse where linen was washed with ebony beaters; the granary with its mahogany stairs; the shed where sheep were sheared with golden shears. There were

the lawns studded with flowers, the limpid streams, the trees whose foliage revealed every colour from dark-green to ruddy scarlet; larches and red acacias, cedars of Lebanon, the China sophora, and Athenian poplars, and it might have been said that the age which broke a sceptre respected a little tree. How things had changed while the garden remained the same!

During the whole of the day Versailles, that dismal solitude, was re-peopled as if by magic. A countless multitude crowded its long and spacious avenues which had been well-nigh deserted since October, 1789. The *fêtes* of the old Monarchy might have been supposed to have been resuscitated. At three o'clock in the afternoon heavy rain fell, and there was every reason to think that the day and evening would end badly. The contrary was the case; the rain, which did not last long, only refreshed the air and made the *fête* more enjoyable. The sun set brilliantly, and with its rays gilded the city of the great King. At night the lines of the architecture of the Grand Trianon were ornamented with many-coloured lamps. Six hundred women magnificently dressed and covered with precious stones met in the gallery of this palace. The Empress spoke to several of them, and it was remarked that the young Sovereign, who had not been fifteen months in France, was already conversant with French society, and knew how to speak to everybody kindly and with dignity.

Then everybody resorted to the theatre of the Petit Trianon, that *bijou* of a room, a miniature, a thing of art, with its two Ionic columns, its proscenium with Love with a lyre and a laurel crown, its ceiling of Olympus, due to the brush of Lagrenée, and its curtains on which two nymphs supported the shield of Marie Antoinette. There, on the 19th of August, 1785, the Queen played the part of Rosine in the *Barbier de Seville*, and the Count d'Artois, as Figaro, had to say what was really a prophesy—"I am obliged to laugh at everything lest I should be forced to weep." In the presence of Napoleon and Marie Louise, on the same stage, a play written for the occasion by M. Alissau de Chazet was performed, called *Le Jardinier de Schönbrunn.* It was followed by a very pretty ballet danced by the *artistes* of the opera.

When the play was over the Emperor and Empress took a walk through the illuminated gardens of the Petit Trianon. Napoleon, hat in hand, gave his arm to Marie Louise. They went to the Island and Temple of Love, that little temple with its statue of Love, by Bouchardon, who is hewing his bow out of the club of Hercules. Hidden musicians played a sweet and mysterious harmony which seemed to come from the depths of the lake, where luminous boats moved to and fro, manned by swarms of children disguised as Cupids. Then the promenade through the

garden recommenced. There was seen a Flemish picture in action, a *tableau vivant*, with gay visaged male and female peasants. Afterwards came groups representing the inhabitants of the various provinces of the Empire, with the different costumes of their respective countries, from the regions watered by the Tiber to the rivers of the Northern Sea. The *fête* was brought to a conclusion by a banquet in the gallery of the Grand Trianon. The personages of the old *régime* were unanimous in saying that it was a marvellous success, and Marie Louise, who was becoming more and more accustomed to France, thought that as far as she was concerned the 25th of August had never been celebrated so brilliantly.

CHAPTER V.

THE TOUR IN HOLLAND.

Shortly after Wagram, Napoleon in the presence of some of his Generals was heard to deplore those bloody expeditions in which he invariably lost some of his early companions. "I have had enough," he added, "of playing the part of a soldier; the time has come to play that of a king." During the year 1811, it seemed as if he would adhere to that new programme. The soldier had given place to the Sovereign, and the victor in so many fights appeared to be ambitious of peaceful glories. He decided to make a tour in Belgium, Holland, and on the banks of the Rhine, during which, by personal investigation, he might find means to increase the prosperity of the people. The Empress was included in the programme, but Napoleon left Compiègne without her on the 19th of September. She was to rejoin him at Antwerp on

the 30th, and at that time she was so attached to him that a separation of a few days appeared distressing to her, so much so that she wrote to her father: "My husband started to-night for the Island of Walcheren, the worst possible climate, and I was not able to accompany him, which distresses me very much."

While the Emperor was visiting Boulogne, Ostend, and Flushing, the Empress, accompanied by a sumptuous Court, set out for Belgium. She left Compiègne on the 22nd of September, and took up her abode in the Castle of Laeken, near Brussels. She showed herself on several occasions in the Belgian Capital, then merely the chief town of the French Department of the Dyle. Napoleon set much store on her appearing in all her brilliancy in the provinces formerly governed by the house of Austria. She went to the theatre, where she was much applauded, and she bought lace to the value of 150,000 francs in order to stimulate the manufacture of the town. On the 30th of September she met her husband at Antwerp. The *Moniteur* spoke as follows of this great city, which had been transformed completely by Napoleon: "Antwerp may be considered as a stronghold in the same rank as Metz and Strasburg. The works which have been carried out there are prodigious. On the left bank of the Scheldt, where two years ago there was only a redoubt, there is now a town 2,000 *toises* in length and with eight bastions. The spectacle afforded

by the dockyards is unexampled; twenty-one men-of-war, eight of them three-deckers, are in course of construction. The arsenal is abundantly provided with every kind of provisions, obtained from the Rhine and the Meuse."

"Seven years ago," continued the *Moniteur*, "there was not in Antwerp a single quay, and the houses came down to the banks of the river. To-day these houses have given place to superb quays, useful for commerce as well as for the defence of the place. Six years ago there was no dock, but merely a few canals where vessels drawing ten or twelve feet of water could enter with difficulty. To-day there is a dock with twenty-six feet of water from the entrance, capable of holding fifty line-of-battle ships, with a lock through which ships of 120 guns can pass."

The formal entry into Amsterdam took place on the 9th of October, 1811. The old capital of Holland was no longer anything more than the capital of the French Department of the Zuyderzee. The Dutch were suffering much from the continental blockade, and keenly regretted King Louis Bonaparte who had in vain tried to alleviate their sufferings. The Emperor when he became their Sovereign gave them as Governor General the Arch-Treasurer Lebrun, Duke de Plaisance. "The Arch-Treasurer," says Count Beugnot in his Memoirs, "is undoubtedly a man of a very high order of mind, but it was easier for

him to translate Homer and Tasso, and to treat with elegant facility on subjects of political economy, than to console a Dutchman for the loss of ten florins."

The more the Dutch were discontented, the more Napoleon tried to wheedle and fascinate them. To quote M. Beugnot again, "It seemed as if at this time Heaven had bestowed on him every instrument of happiness. He had just had a son for whom the poets had a perfect right to imagine a future after their own hearts. The child who inspired the Swan of Mantua with the idyll, or rather the magnificent prophecy, *Sicelides Musæ*, &c., was only an insignificant fellow as compared with him who united in his own person whatever was most venerable in antiquity of race to all the brilliancy of a new and immense glory, and who had no parallel in the past." The fortunate Sovereign imagined that to show himself with the mother of the King of Rome to her Dutch or German people would silence every murmur, efface every reminiscence of a lost nationality, and rouse enthusiasm in which all sufferings and every regret would be lost. Judging by the reception accorded to him he might easily have indulged in that illusion. The quiet inhabitants of Amsterdam emerged from their wonted stolidity to cheer the powerful monarch and his young companion. The Empress made her entry in a gilt glass coach. A guard of honour, composed of youths belonging to the first families of

Holland, met the Sovereign. The Emperor followed on horseback accompanied by a brilliant staff. The sojourn at Amsterdam was surrounded by extraordinary pomp. The *Théâtre Français* had been summoned from Paris. Talma played the *rôles* of Bayard and Orosmanes. The Court remained there a fortnight. The stay of the Emperor was interrupted by excursions to the Helder, one of his creations, to Texel, and to the dams of Medenblick, which protected the country from an invasion from the side of the Zuyderzee.

General de Ségur, who was one of the party, says: "It might have been supposed that during their tour in Holland, and after the two recent attempts at assassination, Napoleon would have surrounded himself with precautions against such frequent attacks; but, on the contrary, full of confidence, and venturing alone into the midst of these people, the most afflicted victims of the continental system, we saw him day after day mingle in the contemplative crowd who dogged his footsteps. He only thought of studying their wants, their manners, and their customs, anxious to see everything for himself, and entrusting to them the guardianship of his person. These northern people have warm hearts underneath their cold exteriors; the marvellous takes serious hold upon them; they have faith in it. Slow to feel, the less easy they are to move, the more profound is the emotion by which they are inspired. They were

prepared for this by the great renown of the Emperor. The re-appearance of this genius of fire, who came, as he told them, to adopt them, inflamed their habitual coldness. Admiration took possession of them, and his presence, his confidence, his words full of consolation and encouragement, and the benefits, already begun, of his active and clever administration, carried them into enthusiasm."

During the absence of the Emperor, which lasted for three days, Marie Louise took a few pretty walks in the outskirts of Amsterdam. She paid a visit to the village of Brock, situated a league beyond the port of Amsterdam, on the banks of a little lake surrounded by ever fresh flowers and grass, and communicating with the Zuyderzee by means of a small canal. This village was famous as a perfect model of the finicking luxury and excess of neatness of which the Dutch are so jealous. It is built in a circle. Constructed round a lake and on a lake, the houses, made of wood and one story high, are painted in fresco outside. The windows of very transparent glass permit a view of curtains of Chinese embroidered silk or Indian muslins. Inside, the large Gothic cupboards are filled with rich porcelain from Japan. There is no sign of habitation, no evidence that the furniture is used. You might suppose yourself in the abode of the Sleeping Beauty of the Wood. There are neither barns, nor granaries, nor sheds, nor stables,

nor kitchens. Everything appertaining to animal life is banished outside this fairy-like enclosure. Posts placed at both ends of each street prevent carriages from entering the village. The pavement is in mosaic, covered with very fine sand on which there are imitations of flowers. The inhabitants carry neatness to such an extent that they compel visitors to take off their boots and put on slippers which are to be found at every door. One day when the Emperor Joseph II. presented himself in boots at the door of one of these strange residences, he was asked to take them off before entering. "I am the Emperor!" he said. "Even if you were the Burgomaster of Amsterdam," replied the master of the house, "you should not come in with your boots on." And the Emperor put on slippers. Entrance to one of these houses was once refused to Queen Hortense, then Queen of Holland, and King Louis said that they were quite right in doing so, because the Queen had not sent word of her intended visit.

When Marie Louise went to the famous village the Burgomaster, of his own accord infringing, on this solemn occasion, the severe regulations of the public highways, arranged that the Imperial chariot should drive over the Mosaic pavement, and halt at his door, where he received the Sovereign. In this house of the Burgomaster, as in all the other houses of the village, there were two doors, one used habitually, and

the other only on three epochs in a lifetime—baptism, marriage, and death. This door, called the fatal door, leads to a room which is invariably shut except on the three days of baptism, marriage, and death. "The Empress," so says M. de Bausset, "asked that the fatal door might be opened. We crossed the threshold with most pleasing vanity in the presence of a number of inhabitants who dared not imitate us, and who were almost tempted to admire the ease and courage with with which we went in and out. After having praised everything, admired everything, and seen everything, we left these good people enchanted with the touching grace and amiable goodness of their young Sovereign."

The Emperor and Empress paid a visit to the town of Saardam, where Peter the Great spent ten months, leading the life of a workman so that he might study the art of building ships. Napoleon remained in thought before the cabin of the famous Czar, just as he had done before the tomb of Frederick the Great. "This is the finest monument in Holland!" he exclaimed, and he gave orders that in memory of Peter the Great Saardam should be raised from the rank of *bourg* to that of *ville*.

Napoleon and Marie Louise also stayed a few hours at Haarlem, a half Gothic, half Japanese town, famous for the passion of its inhabitants for flowers, especially tulips. On the 26th of October they arrived at Rotter-

dam, on the 27th at Loo, slept on the 28th at the Hague, and then left Holland on a visit to the banks of the Rhine. The Emperor carried away a very good impression of the Dutch, whose serious qualities, morality, spirit of order, and love of work, he could appreciate, and he was inclined to side with his brother Louis in the partiality which that Prince displayed toward a nation so interesting in the present as well as in the past.

On the 2nd of November, Napoleon, with the Empress, arrived at Dusseldorf. This pretty town, situated most picturesquely at the junction of the Dussel with the Rhine, was then the capital of the Grand Duchy of Berg, of which Murat was the Sovereign before he was made King of Naples, and which had now been bestowed by the Emperor on the eldest child of Louis Bonaparte. Count Beugnot was at this particular time administering the principality, which had a population of a million. In his curious and witty Memoirs he says: "Ah! how little it would have cost to attach the Germans, who are not averse to the prestige of military glory, in whose eyes the oath of fidelity is no empty form, and who entertained for France some old inclination or other which we cruelly corrected! Germany, where the marvellous always occupies a large place, took a long time to rid herself of her admiration for the Emperor. She was then entirely in favour of the hero who, in order to

accomplish its disappearance, had only to breathe on that Prussian Monarchy which had neither been able to defend the armies nor the memories of Frederick the Great, joined to the invincible legions of the successor of Peter the Great."

At Dusseldorf Napoleon received, according to his wont, all the civil and military authorities, as well as the representatives of all the religions. Among the number of the latter was an old white-bearded rabbi, who was a hundred years old and, having insisted on seeing the Emperor, had to be carried to the hall of audience. He entered, supported on one side by the parish priest, and on the other by the Protestant minister. This union of three religions in one act of homage to the Sovereign did not displease the Emperor, although it was somewhat peculiar. One must read the Memoirs of Count Beugnot to appreciate the activity, the attention to details, and the minuteness of administrative investigation which, at Dusseldorf as elsewhere, characterised the conduct of Napoleon on these tiring trips when, under the pretext of apparent distraction, he gave himself more exertion than in war. The Count, who at Dusseldorf made a fourth in a rubber of whist with Marie Louise, the Duchess de Montebello, and the Prince de Neuchâtel, and who was his Sovereign's partner, tells us on this subject: "The game was played very carelessly, as generally happens in such a case; each of the players kept his eyes only on the cards and turned h... ...nd to what

was going on around the table, where the Emperor came from time to time to say a kind word or two to the Empress, or to joke with the Prince de Neuchâtel and myself. I was too much preoccupied to attempt to find out, either during the dinner or the rubber, what sort of a temper the Empress was in, or to surprise in her face any index to her character. Her journey had been long; she appeared fatigued and bored. She only answered the Emperor in monosyllables, and everybody else by a rather monotonous nod of her head. I do not know what it meant, but I am inclined to think that her Majesty is not free from the timid respect which her august husband imposes on all who have the honour to approach him."

After having remained two days at Dusseldorf, Napoleon and Marie Louise reached Cologne, where they visited the chapel of the eleven thousand virgins, and where a splendid *Te Deum* was sung in the celebrated Cathedral. They subsequently passed through Liège, Givet, Mézières, and Compiègne, and returned to Saint Cloud, after an absence of nearly three months, the longest trip made by the Emperor in the provinces of old or new France. Everywhere throughout his journey he met with the expression of two decided, but rather different sentiments—for the Empress, affectionate respect; for himself, that kind of shock which is inspired by the appearance of a man who is a living prodigy.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ZENITH OF NAPOLEON.

At the beginning of 1812, the Emperor had reached the zenith of his fame, and before we witness the commencement of his fall it may be as well to consider him as he was when at the height of his good fortune, and in the fulness of his strength, power, and glory. In his career there were two distinct periods; the democratic period and the aristocratic period. When the Empire sprang into being the former was not entirely at an end; the coins in usage bore the inscription: *Republique Française Napoléon Empereur;* the Sovereign resembled Cæsar rather than Charlemagne; he did not create any *majorats;* he had only a very paltry number of *emigrés* around him; he was still, from many points of view, the man of the Revolution. In 1812, on the contrary, he had given a species of feudal character to his authority, and he was connected with the Carlovingian epoch. The

saviour of the Convention, the friend of young Robespierre, revived the military and monarchical splendour of the middle ages. The continental Sovereigns treated him with so much deference that he looked upon himself not only as their equal, but as their superior. He called them his brothers, but he considered himself more than a brother to them, the chief, in fact, of the family of Kings. The Kings of Bavaria, Würtemberg, Saxony, Spain, Naples, and Westphalia, all of whom owed their crowns to him, were in reality his subordinates. As for the Princes of the Confederation of the Rhine, the vassals of their protector, they forwarded their tribute with as great haste and punctuality as if they had been simple Prefects of the Empire.

The salons of the Tuileries were crowded with *emigrés*. It might well have been Coblentz. The men of the old *régime* were especially appreciated. Of all the aides-de-camp of the Emperor, the one who was most pleasing to his Sovereign was, perhaps, the Count de Narbonne, *Chevalier d'honneur* to one of the daughters of Louis XV., and Minister of War of Louis XVI. The strictest and most orthodox etiquette was put in force in the Imperial households with inflexible discipline. The high dignitaries and marshals concealed their plebeian names under the sonorous titles of princes and dukes. Madame de Mailly, widow of a Marshal of the Monarchy, was allowed to enjoy

the rank and prerogatives of a wife of a high officer of the Crown, and appeared as Maréchale at the reception of the 1st of January, 1811. The Court of Versailles might be said to have been revived.

Napoleon infinitely preferred divine right to the sovereignty of the nation. "He was very much struck," we read in the Memoirs of Prince de Metternich, "with the idea of a Divine origin of supreme authority. He said to me one day at Compiègne, shortly after his marriage with the Archduchess, 'I notice that the Empress, when she writes to her father, addresses him as His Sacred Imperial Majesty. Is that his usual title with you?' I told him that he was so by tradition of the old German Empire, which bore the title of the Holy Empire, and because the style was equally attached to the Apostolic crown of Hungary." Napoleon then remarked in a solemn tone. "The custom is both beautiful and easily understood. Power comes from God, and thus alone can it be placed beyond the assaults of mankind. I shall adopt the same title shortly."

About the same time when the Emperor was conversing one day with M. Molé about the buildings in course of construction in Paris, the latter asked him when the Church of the Madeleine would be taken in hand. "Well," said the Sovereign, "what am I expected to do about it?" M. Molé replied that he had understood that the Emperor intended it as a Temple

to Glory. "So people do think," replied Napoleon, "but I intend it as an expiatory monument for the murder of Louis XVI." He said to M. de Metternich, "When I was young I was a revolutionist through ignorance and ambition. When I reached the age of reason I followed its counsels and my own instinct, and I crushed the Revolution." He added—"The throne of France was vacant. Louis XVI. had shown himself unable to retain it. Had I been in his place the Revolution—in spite of the immense progress it had made under preceding reigns—would never have been consummated. When the King fell, the Revolution seized upon the soil of France, and I displaced it. The old throne was buried beneath its own rubbish; I had to found a new one upon it."

According to the Prince de Metternich, "one of the greatest and most constant regrets of Napoleon was his inability to invoke the principle of legitimacy as the basis of his power. Few men have felt more deeply than he did how precarious and fragile is authority when destitute of this foundation, and how it lends itself to attack in flank." Speaking one day to an Austrian Statesman of the conduct, when he was still First Consul, he had observed in regard to Louis XVIII., he said: "The reply of Monsieur was redolent of high tradition. There is in the *légitimes* something which does not belong to their mind alone. If Monsieur had only consulted his own mind, he would

have come to terms with me, and I should have carved out for him a magnificent fate."

The Emperor came by-and-bye to look upon himself as the glorious personification of the Divine right, and as the defender of all monarchies. In his eyes the King of Prussia was only a revolutionary Sovereign. If M. de Chateaubriand is to be believed, "the great crime of Frederick William in regard to the Republican Bonaparte was his having abandoned the cause of the kings. The negotiations of the Court of Berlin with the Directory revealed in this Prince, said Bonaparte, a timid, self-interested, ignoble policy, which sacrificed to petty aggrandisements its own dignity and the common cause of thrones. When he looked at Prussia on the new map, he exclaimed, 'How did I come to leave this man so much territory?'"

The philosophers inspired as much horror in Napoleon as the Jacobins did. Free-thinkers were in his eyes but weak-minded thinkers, and although he persecuted the Pope, he judged attacks against the throne and attacks against the altar with equal severity. The irony of the Voltaire school was most especially distasteful to him. In it he saw the double crime of sacrilege and high treason. "He had sworn," says the Prince de Metternich in another place, "unconquerable contempt for the false philosophy, as well as for the false philanthropy of the eighteenth century.

Among the leaders of these doctrines, Voltaire was the especial object of his aversion, and he carried this feeling to the length of even attacking, on every occasion, the prevailing opinion on his literary merit."

Napoleon thought, spoke, and acted as if he had always been Emperor and King. There was not in the whole world a Court as magnificent and brilliant as his. Several Kings were only permitted to figure there as French Princes and high dignitaries of the Empire. Joseph, King of Spain, was Grand-Elector; Murat, King of the Two Sicilies, was Grand-Admiral; Louis Bonaparte, dispossessed of the throne of Holland, appeared in the Imperial Almanack of 1812 in his capacity of Constable. The other high dignitaries at that epoch were Cambacérès, Duke de Parme, Arch-Chancellor of the Empire; Lebrun, Duke de Plaisance, Arch-Treasurer and Governor-General of the Departments of Holland; Prince Eugène de Beauharnais, Viceroy of Italy, Arch-Chancellor of State; Prince Borghèse, Governor-General of the trans-Alpine Departments; Marshal Berthier, Prince de Neuchâtel and Wagram, Vice-Constable; Talleyrand, Prince de Bénévent, Vice-Grand-Elector. At the head of his military household the Emperor had four Colonels-General of the Garde Impériale, all of them Marshals of France—Davoust, Duke d'Auerstadt and Prince d'Eckmuhl; Soult, Duke de Dalmatie; Bessières, Duke d'Istrie; and Mortier, Duke de Trévise. In his

military household were ten aides-de-camp, of whom nine were Generals of Division, and thirteen orderly officers. As Grand-Almoner he had Cardinal Fesch, Archbishop of Lyons, assisted by four ordinary almoners, of whom two were archbishops and two bishops; Duroc, Duke de Frioul, was Grand-Marshal of the Palace; the Count de Montesquiou-Fezenzac, Grand Chamberlain; General de Caulaincourt, Duc de Vicence, Grand-Equerry; Marshal Berthier, Prince de Neuchâtel and Wagram, Grand Huntsman; and the Count de Ségur, formerly Ambassador of Louis XVI. at the Court of Catherine the Great, Grand Master of the Ceremonies. The Emperor had no less than ninety Chamberlains, among whom, by way of specimens of the great names of the old *régime*, may be cited an Aubusson de la Feuillade, a Galard de Béarn, a Marmier, a d'Alsace, a Turenne, a Noailles, a Brancas, a Gontaut, a Gramout, a Beauvau, a Sapieha, a Radziwill, a Potocki, a Choiseul-Praslin, a Nicolay, a Chabot, a La Vieuville, &c., &c.

A variety of distractions enlivened this very aristocratic Court. The winter of 1811-12 was nothing but a succession of enjoyments. "It was in the midst of *fêtes* and amusements of every kind," Madame Durand, First Lady-in-Waiting to the Empress, tells us, "that Napoleon meditated the conquest of Russia. The spoiled child of fortune, intoxicated with flattery, and not even contemplating the possibility of a reverse, he seemed to celebrate his future victories in

advance, and to have exaggerated the pleasure of all his preparations for war. Not a day passed at Court without a spectacle, a concert, or a masked ball." The theatrical performances in the Tuileries presented a fairy-like aspect. The Emperor and Empress occupied a large box facing the stage. By their sides and behind them were the Princes and Princesses of the Imperial family; on the right was the box allotted to the foreign Ambassadors, and on the left that of the French Ministers. A spacious gallery was reserved for the ladies of the Court, who appeared in all the glory of their dazzling toilettes, and whose diamonds shone in the brilliant light. The body of the hall was filled with a crowd of great personages, all in Court dress, wearing their swords, and with their breasts covered with ribands and crosses. During the intervals the Emperor's footmen handed round ices and all kinds of refreshments. The luxury in the lighting was indescribable. It was a veritable apotheosis. The balls in the State apartments on the first floor, and the State dinners in the Diana Gallery were equally magnificent. But the Emperor especially delighted in masked balls, where, replacing the Imperial robe by a simple domino, he amused himself —he whose police was so thoroughly organized, who knew everything, who saw everything—by flirting with the women, and puzzling and astonishing their husbands or lovers, as the case might be.

Napoleon made himself feared everywhere, at a ball as well as in a Cabinet Council. He had as much prestige at a *fête* as he had on the battle-field. The very people who hated him, admired him, for there was in him a veritable power of brilliancy and fascination. His aide-de-camp, General de Narbonne, had an old mother who remained in unshaken fidelity to the old royalty. "Ah, my dear Narbonne," said the Emperor one day, "your seeing your mother so often is not good for my service. I am assured that she does not love me." "It is true, sire," replied the clever courtier, "she has never got farther than admiration." This same Count de Narbonne had been presiding over an electoral district in a department at some distance from Paris. "What do they say of me in the different departments you have traversed?" asked the Emperor. "Sire," replied M. de Narbonne, "some say that you are a god, the rest that you are a devil; but everybody allows that you are more than a man."

A cleverer observer, the bent of whose mind inclined him to criticism rather than enthusiasm, said of Napoleon in 1811: "This genius overpowered human thought; I believed that he was born to enchain Fortune, and I merely found nations prostrate at his feet; thenceforward, in my mind, he was the new progress of the world." The Count Beugnot, Administrator of the Grand Duchy of Berg, added: "I worked from morn-

ing till night with singular ardour, and I consequently quite astonished the inhabitants of the district, who did not know that the Emperor exercised over his servants, however far away from him they might be, the miraculous influence of his actual presence. When I was alone and at work in my office, I thought I saw him before me, and this constant preoccupation, which occasionally inspired in me ideas above my sphere, frequently preserved me from the mistakes which spring from negligence or carelessness. An ancient writer has said that in the conduct of life there is much to be gained by feeling oneself in thought in the presence of a superior man, and I am tempted to believe that the Emperor was generally so well served only because, either from the precautions he took, or by reason of the influence of his name, which was heard always and everywhere, each one of his servants constantly saw him at his side."

If Napoleon produced such an effect even from afar, how were they attracted who found themselves in his presence! Let us listen to the Count Miot de Mélito, who describes an Imperial reception in 1811: "Never had the Tuileries witnessed such a spectacle of pomp and magnificence. Never had a larger number of Princes, Ambassadors, foreigners of highest rank, Princes of the Church, Ministers, Magistrates, and Generals, glittering in gold, purple, and precious stones, and decked with Orders and ribbons of all

colours, offered homage more obsequious, or begged more earnestly at Versailles for the favour of a word or a look. The Emperor alone in the midst of all seemed free and without constraint. With a firm step he moved through this flood of courtiers, who respectfully made way for him. With a look he overjoyed or overwhelmed those whom he approached, and if he deigned to speak, the happy mortal whom he addressed, with bent head and eager ear, scarcely dared to breathe or to reply."

Napoleon had at that time given so much glory to France that he had consoled her for the loss of a priceless possession—liberty.

On the 19th of December, 1832, M. Victor Hugo, speaking before the Chamber of Commerce of Paris for the purpose of compelling the Government to allow "*Le Roi s'amuse*" to be acted, thus expressed himself on the subject of the Imperial zenith: "Gentlemen, in those days it was great. The Empire, as a Government and an Administration, was certainly an epoch of intolerable tyranny, but let us remember that our liberty was largely paid for in glory. The France of that day, like Rome under Cæsar, had a bearing at once submissive and superb. It was not the France we would have, France free and mistress of herself, it was France the slave of a man and mistress of the world. Then our liberty was taken from us, it is true; but we had a very splendid

spectacle given to us. It used to be said, 'On such a day, and at such an hour, I will enter such a Capital,' and on the day and at the hour named the entry took place. All kinds of Kings were made to jostle each other in the ante-rooms. A dynasty was dethroned by a decree in the *Moniteur*. If a column was wanted, the Emperor of Austria had to have it cast in bronze. The lot of French comedians, I confess, was regulated after a rather arbitrary fashion, but the rules were dated at Moscow. All our liberties, I repeat, were taken away from us. There was a censorship, our books were burnt and our pieces proscribed; but to all our complaints magnificent replies could be made in a single word—Marengo! Jena! Austerlitz!"

And the poet thus concluded his speech: "I have only four words to say to you, gentlemen, and I desire that they may be present in your minds when you are deliberating. In this century there has been but one great man, Napoleon, and one great thing, liberty. We have the great man with us no longer; let us endeavour to have the great thing."

Yes, assuredly he surpassed all ordinary stature, this man of whom Chateaubriand, his former pitiless adversary, said: "The world belongs to Bonaparte. That which the ravager was not able to achieve, his fame usurps. Living, he coveted the world. Dead, he possesses it. You may remonstrate in vain, generations pass by without listening to you." And when

somebody asked the author of the *Mémoires d'Outre Tombe* why, after having so violently attacked Napoleon, he admired him so, the illustrious writer replied: "The giant had to fall before I could measure his height."

Those men who were brought into closest contact with Napoleon looked upon him as an almost supernatural being. Let us listen to the Baron de Méneval, who before he was Private Secretary to Marie Louise, when she was Regent, was Secretary of Portfolio to the first Consul and Emperor. "By reason of the influence which Napoleon exercised over his century, he was more than a man. Never, perhaps, will human nature realise greater things than those which this privileged being realised in so few years and against so many obstacles, but which were in no way superior to those projected enterprises which were in reserve in his powerful head. The recollection of that time, of the hours I spent with that truly prodigious man, appears to me a dream. When I remember the profound sentiment he inspired in me I can only humiliate myself before the impenetrable decrees of Providence, who, after having called into being this marvellous instrument of His designs, so speedily removed him from his imperfect work. It may be that God did not will that he should anticipate the time set down in the invariable order He has established! Perhaps He did not will that a mortal should too greatly surpass human proportions!"

If Napoleon was thus admired, even after the frightful catastrophe which brought about his fall, even after his retreat from Russia, after Leipsic, after the two invasions, after Waterloo, what an impression must he have produced upon his fanatical partisans, when he was as it were the incarnation of success and glory, when there was no spot on the sun of his omnipotence, when, protected by I know not what fatality of happiness, he had disarmed envy, discouraged hatred, and conquered fortune to such an extent that she seemed to tremble before him as an obedient slave!

In spite of the prodigious brilliancy by which he was surrounded at the beginning of 1812, Napoleon, represented as if infatuated with himself and his glory, had, nevertheless, even at that epoch of colossal power and unheard of prosperity, moments when he judged himself with perfect impartiality. He had in reality a marvellous knowledge of human nature, and he indulged in no illusions either about his family, whom he mistrusted, or his Marshals, whose defection he might have been said to have foreseen, or his courtiers, whose flatteries did not deceive him. Persuaded that interest is almost always the sole motive of the actions of men, he counted neither on their devotion nor on their gratitude. "One day, addressing my father," General de Ségur tells us, "he asked him what would be said of him after his death. And my father began to enlarge upon what would be our

regret. 'Not at all,' interrupted the Emperor. 'They will say, Ouf!'" And he accompanied this word with a gesture of relief which explained in the most significant manner the following words: "At length we can breathe and rest." This conversation between Napoleon and his Grand Master of Ceremonies took place before his reverses; it happened in 1811, the epoch of his success and strength.

"The Emperor," General de Ségur tells us again, "did not shut his eyes, as much as might be thought, to the destiny in store for his gigantic work. How often did one hear him then exclaim that the weight of his Empire would crush his heir! 'Poor child!' he exclaimed, as he looked at the King of Rome, 'what an entanglement I shall leave you!' Everybody knows the sad impression which one experiences when age and its cumbersome accompaniment of portliness succeeds to the vigorous activity and agility of youth. This transition, which is in itself so painful a warning, was felt by Napoleon towards the end of 1810. How can we doubt but that, at this signal of decline and physical weakness, the future of his work, founded on strength, disquieted him? Let us recall his words to my father at this epoch: 'The least exercise on horseback tires me now.' And what he said to M. Mollien: 'I am mortal, and more so than other people.' And again: 'My sceptre will be very heavy for my heir to wield.'" In this forecast, seeing

that this sceptre and this heir appeared to have no other power to fear than Russia, it may be that as he felt himself growing old, he regretted having acquired territory from north to south as far as the Gulf of Bothnia and the Danube. Thence proceeded that hasty willingness to resign himself to a spirit of conservation rather than conquest, whence it might result that the reproach of an impatient and gigantic ambition would be diminished. This remark is not wanting in justice. It is possible that if the Emperor had not had a son, he would not have undertaken the Russian campaign; and possibly he was actuated less by pride than by false wisdom in undertaking the colossal war, which, in his idea, was destined to accomplish the submission of the Continent and, consequently, that of England.

Much has been said about the pride of Napoleon. On this score we must distinguish the different persons in him—the public man, and the private individual. The public man was compelled to assume more majesty than any other Sovereign. The more recent the grandeur was, the more formal it was obliged to be. The General, when he became Emperor, had to keep at a distance those old companions in arms who formerly were his equals and treated him as a comrade. Familiarity would have been an attack on his prestige, and would have lessened his authority. In the presence of the Court he had to be as a living statue, never coming

down from his pedestal. Scarcely was it to be thought that a human heart still beat beneath the Imperial robe of the Monarch. But the private individual in no way resembled the public man. When he entered his own house he laid aside his commanding gravity as a uniform which one takes off in order to be at one's ease. He then became affable and familiar. He joked, sometimes even somewhat noisily. He was no longer a proud potentate, a terrible conqueror, he was a good husband who rejoiced with his wife, a good father who amused himself with his little child. He bantered the ladies of Marie Louise wittily, but without malice, talking about their toilettes, and from time to time giving them kindly and useful advice. He interested himself in the most petty details as in the most important questions. Indulgent and generous to his dependents, he had the faculty of making himself beloved by them. He lived very happily with Marie Louise. His valet, Constant, tells us: "As a father and a husband he might have served as a model to all his subjects." He actually adored his son, and knew how to play with him much better than the Empress did. Madame Durand remarks: "Never having had children, Marie Louise neither dared to take the King of Rome nor caress him, so afraid was she of hurting him. So the young Napoleon had more affection for his nurse than for his mother, of which Marie Louise was somewhat jealous. The Emperor, on the con-

trary, took him in his arms every time he saw him, kissed him, carried him to the glass, and made faces of all kinds for him. When he was at breakfast he put him on his knees, dipped a finger in the sauce and made him suck it, and rubbed his face against him. The nurse complained, the Emperor laughed, and the child, nearly always in a good temper, appeared to receive the rough caresses of his father with pleasure. It was noticed that those who on those occasions had some favour to ask of the Emperor, were nearly always sure of being favourably received. Before he was two years of age the young Prince was present regularly at breakfast with Napoleon."

At this period of his life the Emperor was really happy. The two years he spent in the society of the young Empress were a fortunate halt in his stormy career. He loved his wife and believed himself loved by her. He bore her goodwill because she was an Archduchess, because she was beautiful, young, in good health, and had given birth to the heir to the Empire. He congratulated himself incessantly on a marriage which was to him the cause of many illusions, but in which he found at least a few moments of moral rest and home happiness, which counts for very much in the existence of such a man. Why was he not wise enough to stop and give thanks to Providence, instead of continuing his dangerous course, and indefinitely tempting fortune? What misfortunes would he not

have spared France, Europe, and himself? With very few concessions he might have disarmed his adversaries, satisfied Germany, consolidated the Austrian alliance, reassured the crowned heads, and brought about a definitive and general peace. We might say of Napoleon that he was his own most formidable enemy, and that holding his happiness in his hand he let it fall to the ground. It was not his second marriage which ruined him, it was the over-audacious combination which made him extend the base of his military operations from Cadiz as far as Moscow.

CHAPTER VII.

MARIE LOUISE IN 1812.

THE Empress Marie Louise was twenty years of age on the 12th of December, 1811. At the beginning of 1812 she was, like Napoleon, at the zenith of her fortune. A Sovereign of two years' standing, she had received in France nothing but unanimous homage, and there was not another woman in the world who occupied so lofty a position. Let us attempt to sketch her portrait at this epoch, when she had attained the summit of earthly prosperity.

Beautiful rather than pretty, Marie Louise had more brilliancy than charm. Her great attraction was her freshness. The whole of her person was redolent of physical and moral health. She had a sweet rather than comely face, very blue eyes, not without a certain amount of animation, a brilliant complexion, pale but not dull auburn hair, a slightly aquiline nose, red and rather thick lips like the lips of the Hapsburgs, feet

and hands which might have served as models, an imposing walk, and height above the average. When she arrived in France she was rather too stout, and her face was too ruddy. But after her confinement these two slight imperfections disappeared. Having become thinner she was graceful, and no woman had a more beautiful complexion. Endowed with a robust constitution, she owed nothing to artifice, but everything to nature. Having no need of paint for her face, nor of coquetry for her mind, fond neither of luxury nor of the toilette, possessing simple and quiet tastes, never seeking after effect, and in all things preferring half-lights to a full glare, she had in her look and bearing a certain candour and ingenuousness which enchanted Napoleon, who was glad to pass from finished coquettes to a real *ingénue*.

Those who had had charge of the education of Marie Louise thought rightly that the greatest ornament of a young girl is her innocence. She had been brought up amid precautions which bordered on scrupulous exaggeration. Out of the books which were thought fit to be placed in the hands of the young Archduchesses, lines and even words had been cut with the scissors because they did not seem quite suitable, and from their rooms all male animals were excluded; females only were admitted there as being possessed of more modest instincts. Napoleon, accustomed to the women of the close of the eighteenth century, and to the

heroines of the Court of Barras, was delighted to find a young girl so pure and so righteously brought up.

Marie Louise in public bore no resemblance to Marie Louise in private. In public her cold manner was wrongly set down to haughtiness. She was imposing, and weighed every word she uttered, and superficial observers attributed to pride what really was the outcome of reserve and timidity. The young Empress had reason to distrust the French Court. She knew what it had cost her great-aunt Marie Antoinette to strive to live on the throne as a private individual, and to display kindness bordering on familiarity. The best mode for the Empress to avoid malevolence and criticism was to say little. She knew French well, but it was not her maternal tongue, and however thoroughly she had mastered the grammar she could only acquire an imperfect knowledge of the niceties of the language. The fear of making use of unusual, though possibly correct phrases, imparted a sort of fear to her conversation. Moreover her husband would not have liked to have seen her engage in long conversations. Political subjects were forbidden her, and her great charm in the eyes of Napoleon was that she never interfered in public affairs. She never attempted to pass as a witty woman. Though very well read, she was deficient in the keen observation, ingenious comparisons, jingle of brilliant phrases, and the science of picturesque expressions or appropriate words which constitute what

is called wit in France. She distrusted the character of fashionable Frenchwomen, those romantic but not really sentimental beauties, who invariably said they were more deeply moved than they really were, who possessed the art of fainting when they thought that to faint would do good, and who, in their drawing-rooms, and especially in their boudoirs, too often resembled actors on a stage. Marie Louise did not take the trouble to feign ideas or sentiments which she did not possess. She was always natural.

Comparing his two wives one with the other, Napoleon said at St. Helena:—"One was art and grace, the other innocence and simple nature. At no moment of her life had the one either manners or ways that were not agreeable or fascinating. It would have been impossible to find fault with her on this head; she only studied to produce a pleasing impression, and she succeeded in her aim without allowing the effort to be perceived. All that art could imagine to increase attraction was put in practice by her, but so mysteriously that at most it could only be suspected. The second, on the contrary, never dreamt that there was anything to be gained by innocent artifice. The one was always beside the truth; her first impulse was to say no. The other was ignorant of dissimulation; everything circuitous was strange to her. The first asked for nothing, but was in debt everywhere; the second never hesitated to ask when

she had spent all, a very rare occurrence. She never took anything without feeling obliged by her conscience to pay for it at once. However, both were good, sweet, and very much attached to their husband."

Marie Louise was not capable of achieving such success in society as Josephine won. For that she needed an entirely French turn of mind, which she did not possess in the least degree. The first Empress knew French society thoroughly, and the second did not know it at all. Josephine had witnessed the closing happy days of the old *régime* and the golden age of the Revolution. She was one of the heroines of that brilliant but especially amusing epoch, in reference to which Talleyrand said, " Whoever did not live before 1789 is ignorant of the sweetness of life." When she was the Viscountess de Beauharnais the wittiest people in Paris lived on terms of intimacy with her. Although she was not nearly so well informed as Marie Louise, her conversation was more animated and more varied. She excelled in touching upon every subject, never saying anything very serious, but always making use of some pleasing turn of expression. Her keenest desire was, by her amiability, to make everybody forget that she was not born to a throne, and it might almost be said that she was incessantly seeking to obtain pardon from the society of the Faubourg Saint Germain for her eleva-

tion. The names of the great families of France produced upon her, formerly a simple private individual, much more impression than upon Marie Louise, placed by right of birth as well as of her crown far above all Frenchwomen without exception. The persons of the old *régime* were not preferred by her. She was much more in sympathy with Madame Lannes than with the Princess de Beauvau or the Countess de Montesquiou. As she did not take the trouble to flatter the Faubourg Saint Germain, which she kept at a distance, she did not make such advances towards them as they had been accustomed to from the first Empress. She felt that at heart the Royalists despised her for having attached her ancient coat-of-arms to the new fortune of Bonaparte. She belonged to a race which had never had any very great affection for the Bourbons, while Josephine, born in a Royalist family, had remained faithful, even on the Imperial throne, to her worship of the old royalty.

Marie Louise indulged in no illusions. She knew that courtiers, under appearances where adulation was carried as far as obsequiousness, concealed an amount of real malice and malevolence which was all the more dangerous because it was hidden, and that the very people who burnt so much incense at her feet would have been delighted to catch her tripping. She was consequently ever on the watch, and in public she never departed from her attitude of cold

benevolence and wise reserve. She pleased Napoleon precisely because she possessed qualities opposed in every way to those of Josephine, and if she had attempted to imitate her predecessor she would have lost, in the eyes of her husband, the greater part of her *prestige*. He had ordered her to be always a Sovereign as he was always the Emperor. She obeyed him, and was right in obeying him. Having the approbation of her husband, who had never occasion to reproach her, she never modified in the least degree the very prudent and very dignified line of conduct which she had adopted from the moment of her arrival in France. She had cause to congratulate herself, for during the whole time that she lived with Napoleon no calumny was ever hurled at her, nor was the slightest disparaging insinuation made in regard to her morality. At St. Helena the Emperor said, "Marie Louise was virtue itself."

Absolutely correct in bearing and speech, the Empress avoided criticism, but did not attract any warm praise. She was esteemed rather than loved, and in spite of her precocious wisdom, she did not win the warm sympathy or the enthusiastic admiration which less reserved but more amiable Sovereigns inspire. However, nobody complained of her. Count Miot de Mélito, describing a reception at the Tuileries in 1811, said: "The Empress entered. Her face wore a noble, but slightly disdainful expression.

Attended by the Duchess de Montebello she made a tour of the room, spoke gracefully and affably to a number of persons who at her request were presented to her, and each one was compelled to praise her for the gracious reception she accorded to all."

The Duke de Rovigo, Minister of Police, expresses himself thus in his Memoirs: "Every time Marie Louise spoke she charmed, her successes in France were due to herself alone; for I declare upon my honour that on no occasion did the Administration employ any special means to ensure a favourable reception for her in public. When she had to appear, whether in the streets or the theatre, the care exercised by the Administration was confined to seeing that nothing contrary to decorum was committed; that is the only precaution I ever allowed myself to take. For example, when I knew that she intended going to the theatre, I took care to secure all the boxes facing hers, as well as those whose occupants might have annoyed her by their staring. I then took the precaution of sending these tickets to respectable families, who were very glad to make use of them. In like manner I formed the gallery of the theatre whenever the Empress went there. As for precautions in regard to her reception by the pit, I never took any. The Empress Marie Louise, when showing herself in public, was accustomed to make three bows so gracious that people did not wait for

the third before breaking out into loud applause. She herself excused me from going to any expense on this score." As soon as she had saluted the public, the young Sovereign retired modestly to the back of her box. To be the object of every opera-glass in the building was distasteful to her. The supreme rank, the pride of the throne, the incomparable position which would have inspired other women with joy amounting almost to intoxication, left her well nigh indifferent.

Was Marie Louise attached to Napoleon? Certainly. Was she really in love with him? We doubt it. He was twenty-two years older than she was, and if she was in every respect the woman to suit him, he probably was not the man she would have dreamt of. He had too much power, too much genius, too much majesty. A modest house would perhaps have had greater charms for her than the imperial Olympus, of which her husband was the Jupiter and she should have been the Juno. He was undoubtedly surrounded by unparalleled glory; but he had gained that glory especially against Austria. Arcole and Marengo, Austerlitz and Wagram, were names which sounded badly in Austrian ears. If she had been allowed to choose, this daughter of the Hapsburgs would probably have preferred to the powerful Emperor a small German Prince, possessing neither large territories nor great riches, but having reminiscences, ideas, and

hopes in common with her. She had made up her mind to love her husband, and she easily succeeded. She liked him for his regard, forethought, and respect, and in the affectionate, though not passionate, devotion she displayed towards him there was thus no sort of *arrière-pensée.* She thoroughly believed that she would always be faithful to him. Not only was she attached to him, but she was jealous of him. The proximity of Josephine annoyed her, and made her uneasy. It was, in fact, a singular fact that there should have been two Empresses in France, both enjoying almost equal official honour. Marie Louise was aware of the popularity of Josephine. She took umbrage at it, while pitying the woman on whom an inflexible policy had imposed so hard a sacrifice. Perhaps, too, she said within herself that it was impossible absolutely to rely on the feelings of a man who, for State reasons, had abandoned a woman with whom he had formerly been madly in love. Who knows but that, when she married, she had not the fear lest, in case she had no children, she should suffer the same fate as the first Empress? She was not completely reassured until she had a son. Before that happened she was so jealous that one day when she was informed that Napoleon had been to pay a visit to Josephine, she was seen to shed tears for the first time since her arrival in France. Another day, the Emperor having suggested taking advantage of the absence of her pre-

decessor to pay a visit to Malmaison, her face fell so suddenly that Napoleon at once gave up the idea. But from the moment that she gave the King of Rome to the world, Marie Louise knew jealousy no more. Convinced that she had definitely reconciled Austria to France, and that her child was the pledge of the peace and happiness of all Europe, she believed that she had accomplished her destiny so thoroughly that she could count for ever on the affection and gratitude of her husband.

If we can rely on the judgment of Cardinal Maury, who was so celebrated in the Constituent Assembly, and whom the Emperor had just appointed Archbishop of Paris, Napoleon was very much in love with his young wife. "It would be useless," wrote the Cardinal to the Duchess d'Abrantès, "to attempt to make you realise how fondly the Emperor loves our charming Empress. It is love, but pure love this time. He is in love, I tell you, and in love as he never was with Josephine; for, after all, he never knew her when she was young; she was over thirty when they married, while this one is young and fresh as spring. You will see her, and you will be enchanted with her. If you only knew how gay and graceful she is, and especially how familiar she is with the persons whom the Emperor receives on intimate terms. You will see how amiable she is. The evenings given by the Queen of Holland have been much talked about,

but I assure you that the Empress is charming towards all those whom the Emperor honours by invitations to the private parties at the Tuileries. They go there in the evening to pay their Court and play with their Majesties at billiards or reversis, and then the Empress has such pretty, graceful ways that the Emperor looks as if he were dying to kiss her."

We are inclined to think that there is a certain amount of exaggeration in the enthusiasm of Cardinal Maury. Marie Louise undoubtedly was very pleasing to Napoleon. But if she had been a young girl in a humble position he would probably never have singled her out. What he especially loved in her was the Archduchess, the daughter of the German Cæsars, and in the sentiment with which she inspired him there was probably more self-love than real love. He was not drawn towards her, we may be quite assured, by those overwhelming passions which take possession of body and soul, such as the passion he felt for Josephine. He would not have written his new wife burning letters after the style of Jean Jacques Rousseau, such as he wrote to Josephine at the time of the first Italian campaign. In his affection for Marie Louise there was a certain calmness and method almost paternal. It was the reflection of mature age after the impetuous ardour of youth. Nevertheless, Napoleon paid more deference to, and had more regard for, his second wife than his first. Some time after

her marriage Marie Louise said to M. de Metternich: "I am sure they think a great deal about me in Vienna, and that the general opinion is that I am a prey to daily anguish. It is thus that truth frequently is improbable. I am not afraid of Napoleon, but I am beginning to think that he is afraid of me."

It is alleged that the Emperor was not absolutely faithful to Marie Louise. In any case, if he was guilty of infidelities he concealed them very carefully, and he never distressed his second wife as he had distressed his first. He boasted that he only appreciated honest men and virtuous women; and he was anxious that nobody should reproach him with giving a bad example. His Court became severe, at all events in appearance. Decorum in it was placed on a par with etiquette.

The happy days of Marie Antoinette were, in reality, less happy than those of Marie Louise. From the moment of her entry into France, Marie Antoinette encountered a secret hostility which Marie Louise nowhere experienced. Nobody reproached the Empress with the Austrian nationality out of which a hostile opposition fashioned a weapon against the Queen. Marie Antoinette was surrounded by snares and pitfalls, which never were placed on the path of Marie Louise. Who would have dared to behave towards the wife of Napoleon as the Cardinal de Rohan behaved towards the wife of Louis XVI.?

Could such a trial as that of the necklace have happened under the Empire? Pamphlets of all sorts were launched against the Queen. The Empress was not even once insulted or calumniated. The most bitter foes of her husband respected her. Let us add that the Emperor Napoleon was more fascinating than King Louis XVI., and that Marie Louise was a mother at once, whereas Marie Antoinette suffered for a long time from barrenness for which she was not to blame.

The happy days of Marie Louise did not last longer than two years, but it may safely be said that they were cloudless. The mistake which historians make in passing judgment on famous personages is that they aim at a single portrait instead of a series, according to time and circumstances. What was true in 1812 was no longer so in 1813, still less so in 1814. Human life has its seasons just as the year has. Is anything more unlike a bright spring day than a gloomy winter one? In his history of the Restoration, M. de Lamartine has drawn a portrait of Marie Louise, which is exact enough in regard to the period subsequent to the disasters of the Empire, but which does not seem to us to apply to the halcyon days of the mother of the King of Rome. "Marie Louise," says the historian poet, "took refuge, against the malevolence which was on the watch against her, in ceremony, retirement, and silence. Napoleon loved

her for her superiority and pride. She was the escutcheon of his adoption by the mighty. She was the mother of his child, the perpetuity of his ambition. The public were unjust enough to exact from Marie Louise the reciprocity and passionate devotion of love, when her nature could only inspire her with respect and a sense of duty towards a soldier who had merely seen in her a hostage for Germany and a pledge of posterity. This constraint militated against her natural charms, saddened her face, intimidated her mind, and compressed her heart. In her you could only see a foreign decoration attached to the columns of the throne. History itself, written in ignorance of the truth and under the influence of the resentment of the courtiers of Napoleon, has calumniated this Princess. Those who knew her will recover for her, not the stoical and theatrical glory which was expected of her, but her nature. The supposed stupidity of her silence concealed womanly thoughts and mysteries of feeling which carried her far beyond that Court. A magnificent, but harsh exile! She would feign nothing, either during her greatness or after the disasters of her master; that was her crime. The theatrical world of that Court wished for the immolation of conjugal passion in a captive of victory. She was too natural to feign love when she felt only obedience, terror, and resignation. History will accuse her, nature will pity her. There was

anxiety that she should play a part; the actress failed, but the woman remained."

The Marie Louise thus described by the author of *Jocelyn* is not the Marie Louise of the beginning of 1812. At that time the young Empress neither considered herself as "a captive of victory," nor "a foreign decoration attached to the columns of the throne." Napoleon inspired her with no terror in regard to his intimate relations with her, and there was no constraint about her which "militated against her natural charms, saddened her face, intimidated her mind, and compressed her heart." She did not find her Court a "magnificent but harsh exile." These ideas might have occurred to her in her evil days, but we do not believe that she had them before the Russian campaign. If M. de Lamartine had read the letters which she wrote to her father in 1810, in 1811, and the beginning of 1812, he would no doubt have recognised the fact that for some time the second wife of Napoleon was happy on the throne of France.

We prefer the portrait in the Memoirs of M. de Méneval, to that drawn by the great poet. "The more," he says, "Napoleon knew the Empress, the more satisfied was he with his choice. The character of this Princess seemed to have been made for him; she gave him happiness and consolation in the midst of care and a stormy life. In every-day relations she was easy and good-natured without losing aught of

her dignity. Never did either complaint or reproach issue from her mouth. Endowed with a sweet, but reserved and circumspect disposition, her feelings were not expressed with much vivacity. She was benevolent and loved to give; she was possessed at once of simplicity and tact, a sweet gaiety and wit without sarcasm. Well educated, she made no parade of her knowledge; she was afraid of being accused of pedantry. As the companion of the Emperor, her endearing qualities won the affection of her husband, just as her unchanging sweetness fascinated all who were brought in intimate connection with her. In thus judging her I faithfully record my recollections, and I am free from all partiality inspired by her past or my own present preoccupation. They make a great mistake who suppose that duty in her was a constant struggle against inclination; she was natural and did not know how to conceal her impressions; but the event proved that if she was inclined to virtue when it was easy, she lacked the necessary struggle to put it in practice when it was hard."

Marie Louise had nothing in her character resembling that of her great-grandmother Marie Thérèse, or her grandmother Marie Antoinette. She rather resembled the wife of Louis XIV. or that of Louis XV. She would have lived calmly, modestly, and irreproachably like those two Queens if her destiny had not cast her into the midst of unforeseen and terrible events, the

shock of which she had not strength enough to bear. In 1812 we see in her a tender mother, a faithful wife, a respectable Sovereign. If Napoleon had adopted a less imprudent policy everything would have lasted. He must undoubtedly have said so to himself at St. Helena when he came to review his life impartially, and for that reason he had neither thought of anger nor word of bitterness against the woman whom others judged so harshly.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOME OF THE EMPRESS.

We have just attempted to sketch, both from a physical and moral point of view, the portrait of Marie Louise in 1812, when she was in the zenith of her prosperity. We are now going to glance at the organisation of her household at that period, and at the details of the life she led. Her Chief Almoner was Count Ferdinand de Rohan, formerly Archbishop of Cambrai; her lord-in-waiting, the Count de Beauharnais, who had held the same post in regard to the Empress Josephine, whose relative he was. Napoleon at first intended to appoint General the Count de Narbonne to this post, but Marie Louise dissuaded him. M. Villemain, in his biography of M. de Narbonne, says: "The Empress Marie Louise, as a rule so sweetly submissive to her powerful husband, on this occasion rebelled, and whether from her kindness as a woman, her pride as a Sovereign, or

some superstitious scruple as a second wife, she insisted on retaining the Count de Beauharnais in the chief post within the Imperial domestic household. She did not wish at any cost to appear to exclude, in the person of this relative of Josephine, the maiden name of the Princess whom she replaced on the throne of France. On the other hand we may suppose that she wished to set aside, in the person of the amiable and brilliant Count de Narbonne, a set of things of which she knew little and was somewhat afraid—the trivial grace and mocking spirit of the old *régime*, and also, undoubtedly, the sad presentiments attached, in the case of the young Austrian Archduchess, to everything that recalled Versailles and the daughters of Louis XV. who became the aunts of Queen Marie Antoinette. In a word, Marie Louise, cold and calm, was inflexible in her repugnance to the selection announced to her by the Emperor. The latter yielded and summarily put an end to the difficulty by appointing M. de Narbonne one of his aides-de-camp, a singular favour to bestow upon a man fifty-five years of age, a relic of the old Court, made suddenly a member of the most warlike and active staff of a Monarch." As Chief Equerry Marie Louise had Prince Aldobrandini, and as Master of the Ceremonies the Count de Soyssel d'Aix.

Her lady-in-waiting was Madame Lannes, Duchess de Montebello, widow of the illustrious Marshal who

fell in Austria during the first war. Baron de Méneval tells us that the Emperor hesitated between this lady and the Princess de Beauvau. "The fear of introducing into the Court influences opposed to the national ideas which were likely to be in favour of a German Princess, against whom he suspected there would be prejudices of caste and birth, made him give up the idea. He decided in favour of the Duchess; he thought he owed this mark of distinction to the memory of one of the oldest and bravest of his companions in arms."

The choice turned out to be a happy one. Madame de Montebello was ten years older than the Empress; she was very beautiful, calm, and of irreproachable conduct. The Emperor, when he appointed her, said, "I am giving the Empress a veritable lady of honour."

In the purity of her features the Duchess de Montebello recalled the virgins of Raphael. There was in all her bearing, as well as in her whole life, a consistent calm and regularity which was very grateful to Marie Louise. The Empress was very much touched by the manner in which her lady-in-waiting took care of her during her confinement. At that time Madame de Montebello never left her Sovereign's room for nine days; she passed her nights on a couch, and gratitude was displayed towards her for having accomplished all that could have been expected of her whether from a sense of duty or affection.

Madame Durand says, that as Marie Louise experienced the want of a friend, the Duchess insinuated herself so thoroughly in her confidence and good graces that the Empress could not do without her. The Sovereign speedily loved her as a sister, and proved it to her by the utmost kindness both towards herself and her children. Happy when she discovered what presents would be agreeable to her, she always offered them with exquisite kindness. She put the portrait of her lady-in-waiting by the side of those of her own family. Such a show of preference naturally excited much jealousy, especially among the ladies of the Palace, the great majority of whom belonged to families very much older than that of the new Duchess, and witnessed such favour with displeasure. Whenever the Emperor was absent Madame de Montebello took up her residence with the Empress. On such occasions Marie Louise used to go every morning to chat in the room of her lady-in-waiting, and in order to avoid the room which the ladies of the Palace occupied, she made use of a small, dark passage, a proceeding which much annoyed those ladies. If we are to believe Madame Durand, Madame de Montebello thought it beneath her to conceal what she thought about those of whom she spoke; she expressed herself openly and plainly. This frankness, very rare in Courts, gained her the confidence of the Empress, but also made her many enemies, who, in

spite of their malevolence, never succeeded in injuring her reputation.

The Empress had as her lady of the bedchamber the Countess de Luçay, who had been a lady of the Palace from the beginning of the Consulate. She was a sweet, modest, and essentially virtuous woman who enjoyed general esteem and sympathy. The Emperor set great store by her. "In his private relations," says General de Ségur, "Napoleon was quiet and confiding, taking especial pleasure in men of honour, whose delicacy and honesty were beyond doubt, as well as in irreproachable women; on this point his eyes, very clear-sighted, were exacting. This is incontestable, with perhaps a few exceptions; the composition of his Council, and especially the selection of his most intimate adherents, prove it. In connection with this I may mention first of all the Grand Marshal Duroc, and indeed all the interior *personnel* of the Palace, a service more upright, better ordered and managed, and more honourably and economically conducted than the best regulated private house could ever have been. As for the ladies of the Palace, I need only name Madame de Luçay, my mother-in-law, the lady of the bedchamber, and Madame de Montesquiou, Governess of the King of Rome, whom the Emperor selected when my mother, who was then ill, declined the post. When once he gave his confidence there was no limit to it."

The Countess de Montesquiou, Governess of the King of Rome, was the wife of the Grand Chamberlain of the Emperor. Baron Méneval sums her up as follows: "Born in a high position, Madame de Montesquiou had a reputation justly acquired. She was forty-six years of age when she was appointed Governess of the Children of France, and her reputation was intact. She was pious, but her devotion was free from all pettiness, and she was possessed of great simplicity of manner, a lofty but benevolent tone, a firm character, and solid principles. She united in herself all the qualities desirable in the important position assigned to her by the Emperor of his own free judgment." Madame Durand is no less favourable in her estimate of the Countess de Montesquiou. "It would have been," she says, "difficult to have made a better choice. This lady, born of an illustrious family, had received an excellent education; she joined to the tone of good society a solid piety which was too enlightened ever to descend to bigotry. Her conduct had always been so regular that calumny had never dared to attack her. She was sometimes reproached for haughtiness, but it was tempered by politeness and the most graceful complacence. She took the tenderest and most assiduous care of the young Prince, and nothing could be more noble or more generous than the devotion which subsequently led her to tear herself away from her country, her friends, and her family, to follow the fortunes of a child all whose hopes had been extinguished. All she

received for this devotion was bitter disappointment and unjust persecution."

The Duchess de Montebello and the Countess de Montesquiou had only slight sympathy for each other, but they gave no sign of any misunderstanding. Even had they been so disposed, they would not have dared to do it for fear of Napoleon, who insisted upon harmony in his Court. Nevertheless, the existence of two cliques in a state of latent rivalry could be distinguished at the Tuileries—the old and the new nobility. The first had at its head the Count and Countess of Montesquiou, the second, the Duchess de Montebello, to whom the preference of the Empress imparted great preponderance. Madame Durand tells us that all the influence enjoyed by the Grand Chamberlain and his wife, the Governess of the King of Rome, was employed to obtain favours, pensions, and places for the nobility, whether in or out of France; they represented to the Emperor that this was the surest means of attaching them to his person, and to make them love his government. They spoke thus because such was their way of thinking, and because, believing that the destiny of France was settled for ever, they desired to attach to the Sovereign of that Empire those whom they regarded as being by right its firmest support. A witness of the indefatigable care bestowed by Madame Montesquiou upon his son, it was a rare occurrence for him to refuse what she asked.

The new nobility, jealous of the old, had a pro-

tectress in the person of the Duchess de Montebello, who was very proud, and did not admit the superiority of the old aristocracy over the illustrious plebeians, such as her husband, who had no ancestors, but who were themselves destined to become ancestors. She considered that the title of Duke had not been enough for her valiant husband; that the Emperor had been guilty of an injustice in not having made him a Prince like Davoust, Masséna, and Berthier, and that Marshal Lannes was worth far more than all the dukes and marquises of the Court of Versailles.

Between these two groups of the old and new nobility there was at Court a third party, the military party, having at its head the Grand Marshal of the Palace, Duroc, Duke de Frioul, who, seeing no honour and glory except in the career of a soldier, had but little esteem for the other professions. The Emperor was secretly in his favour; but none the less did he follow out his own system of neutralising all opinions by contriving to balance their strength. Each of the three rival parties was made use of by him to keep a strict watch on the other two, and by this means he kept himself informed of everything which it was his interest to know.

In 1812 Marie Louise had, as ladies of the Palace, the Duchess de Bassano, the Countess Victor de Mortemart, the Duchess de Rovigo, the C[illegible]ses de Montmorency, de Talhouet [illegible] de Lau[illegible]châtel, de

Bouillé, de Montalivet, de Perron, de Lascaris Ventimiglia, de Brignolé, de Gentile, and de Canisy, the Princess Aldobrandini, the Duchesses de Dalberg, d'Elchingen, de Bellune, the Countesses Edmond de Périgord and de Beauvau, Mesdames de Traisignies, Vilain XIV., Antinori, Rinuccini, and Pandolphini Capone, and the Countesses Chigi and Bonacorsi. The ladies of the Palace attended the Empress when out walking, and at the theatre. They were really female chamberlains, they were by the side of their Sovereign whenever she went in public, but they were not associated with her home life, nor did they reside in the Imperial abodes. This privilege was reserved for six other ladies, who occupied a far inferior rank in the hierarchy of the Court, but who had a much more intimate acquaintance with the Empress Marie Louise.

During the reign of the Empress Josephine, she had in her household *dames d'annonce*, who bore some resemblance to female ushers, and whose especial business it was to announce the persons who presented themselves in the apartments of the Sovereign. These four ladies had, in regard to details of etiquette, numerous controversies with the ladies of the Palace. Napoleon, in order to cut these old rivalries short, decided that Marie Louise, instead of the four ladies, should have four fresh ones who should be chosen from among those entrusted in the Ecouen establishment, superintended by Madame Campan, with the education

of the daughters of members of the Legion of Honour.

Among the four ladies who were appointed, was the widow of a general, Madame Durand, from whose curious Memoirs we have frequently quoted. Some months later, the Emperor increased their number to six, and appointed two prefects of the Ecouen establishment, the sister and daughter of distinguished officers, Mademoiselles Malerot and Rabusson.

The six *dames d'annonce* had a very important position. Not only did they announce the persons who called on the Empress, but they were actually responsible for all the inner discipline, and had under their orders six chambermaids, who only entered the apartments of the Sovereign when they were rung for, while the ladies themselves, four of whom were on duty every day, were with Marie Louise all day long. They went into the Empress's bedroom before she got up, and did not leave her until she was in bed. Then all the means of ingress into the bedroom of the Sovereign were closed, except one leading to another room where slept the particular lady on duty, and Napoleon himself could not get into Marie Louise's room at night except by passing through this room. No man, except the Empress's private secretary, the keeper of her privy purse, and her doctors, could enter these rooms without an order from the Emperor. Even ladies, except the lady-in-waiting and the lady of the

bedchamber, were only received there after having obtained permission from the Empress. The *dames d'annonce* were entrusted with the due fulfilment of these regulations, and were responsible for their execution. One of them was present during the music, drawing, and embroidery lessons which the Empress took. They wrote at her dictation or by her order. The same etiquette was observed during the Court journeys. One of these six ladies invariably slept in a room by the side of that of the Sovereign, and that room had necessarily to be crossed in order to reach the one occupied by Marie Louise.

Madame Durand narrates that the jeweller Biennais had made for the Empress a despatch-box with certain secret drawers, which the Sovereign alone was to know, and which he requested permission to explain to her. Marie Louise mentioned the matter to the Emperor, who gave her permission to receive the jeweller. Biennais, sent for to Saint Cloud, was shown into the music-room. He was at one end with the Empress; Madame Durand was in the same room, but sufficiently far away not to be able to hear the explanation. Just as the interview was at an end the Emperor arrived, and seeing Biennais, asked who he was; the Empress hastened to give his name, explained what he had come about, and reminded the Emperor that he himself had given permission to admit him. The Emperor flatly denied the latter point, pretended that the lady on

duty had committed a fault, and gave her a severe reprimand, which the Empress had very hard work to interrupt, although she said to him, "But I ordered Biennais to be sent for." The Emperor laughed, and told her that that did not matter to him, that the lady was responsible for the people whom she allowed to enter, that she alone was wrong, and that he hoped it would not happen again.

Another time, while M. Paër was giving Marie Louise a music lesson, the lady on duty, who was present as usual at the lesson, had an order to give. She opened a door, and with her body half outside it, she was giving the order, when Napoleon entered. Not seeing her at first, he imagined that she was not present. The music-master went out. "Where were you when I came in?" said the Emperor to the lady. She replied that she had never left the room. He would not believe her, and addressed a long sermon to her, in which he told her that he would not allow any man, no matter what his rank was, to flatter himself that he had remained for two seconds alone with the Empress. He added with vivacity, "Madame, I honour and I respect the Empress; but the Sovereign of a great Empire should be placed above even the chance of suspicion."

The gynæceum of Marie Louise was watched over with the greatest care, and submitted to a very severe discipline. Napoleon went in and out of his wife's room when and how he pleased, [illegible] did not mi[illegible]

it because, having absolutely nothing to conceal, she then had not the slightest desire to be unfaithful to her husband, even in thought.

Madame Durand tells us that the Emperor, who would be master in important matters, both allowed and liked contradiction in those of little interest. "When he was in the apartments of Marie Louise he contradicted the ladies of the household on a thousand points; sometimes they thought he was in earnest; he would then continue the argument, and laugh heartily when he had succeeded in annoying the young ladies who, very frank and but little used to the ways of the world or the Court, frequently replied in terms very lively and very natural, but very pleasing to the person to whom they were addressed."

The position of the six *dames d'annonce* who lived with the Empress continually excited much jealousy. The name by which they were called was changed several times. For some time they obtained permission to call themselves first ladies of the Empress; but this title ruffled the ladies of the Palace, who wanted to have them called first chambermaids, which made them very indignant. The Emperor in the end gave them the name of readers. They had under their order six ordinary chambermaids, who had no rank. They dressed and booted the Empress, and did her hair in the morning. They were actually ladies'-maids.

Let us see now how Marie Louise spent her days.

At 8 a.m. her shutters were opened and her blinds drawn up. Her early breakfast and the papers were brought to her in bed. At nine o'clock she dressed, and then received such persons as were admitted privately. At noon she took her second breakfast. Then she played a little, drew, did needlework, or had a game of billiards. At two o'clock, if the weather was fine, she took a drive, accompanied by the Duchess de Montebello, the lord-in-waiting, and two ladies of the Palace. Sometimes she rode on horseback. Napoleon himself had given her lessons in the riding school at Saint Cloud. "He walked by her side holding her by the hand, while the equerry held the bridle of her horse; he soothed her fears and encouraged her. She profited by his lessons, grew bold, and ended by being a very good rider. When she had become a sufficiently expert horsewoman to do honour to her master, the lessons were continued occasionally in the avenue of the private Park into which the family room, so called because it contained portraits of all the members of the Imperial family, opened. The Emperor, when he had a moment's leisure after breakfast, sent for the horses, mounted his own as he was, in shoes and silk stockings, and caracoled by the side of the Empress; he roused her horse and made it gallop, laughing heartily at the exclamations of fear which escaped her—all danger, be it said, being guarded against by the presence of grooms stationed

in echelon, ready to stop her horse and prevent a fall."

After having returned from her walk, Marie Louise frequently had a lesson in music or painting. She was a very good musician, and had real talent for the piano. Prudhon and Isabey, who taught her painting and drawing, were loud in their praises of her taste. As Lamartine says, "The moment she went into her private rooms or into the solitude of the garden she became Austrian once more. She cultivated the arts of poetry, drawing, and singing. Education had brought these talents to perfection in her, as if to console her, when far from her native land, for the absences and sorrows to which the young girl would one day be condemned. She excelled in them, but for herself alone. She read and repeated from memory the poets of her own tongue and sky." Marie Louise also did many good works, but without ostentation and almost in secret. Consequently she did not enjoy all the reputation for generosity which she deserved. Her benevolence was not confined to the donation of 10,000 francs which she set aside each month for the poor out of her Privy purse, which was 50,000 francs a month; no unfortunate person was ever mentioned to her without his immediately experiencing the effect of her charity.

Marie Louise in private was kind and affable. Very polished, very sweet, devoid, unlike so many other

princesses, of changeable likes and dislikes, and fancies as determined as ephemeral, she was neither unjust, nor violent, nor capricious. She was never seen in a rage. She was no giver of vain promises, she had no affectation of benevolence, but she could be relied upon; she never distressed nor humiliated anybody. Habituated from her infancy to a Court life, she was an easy mistress, because she had learnt how to reconcile two things frequently incompatible—dignity and goodness. All those who had opportunities of close observation agree in doing her that justice. According to Madame Durand, she sometimes had in public the sad look caused by the duties of etiquette which she was bound to carry out; but "when she came back to her own rooms she was sweet, sprightly, affable, and adored by all those who were constantly with her. Nothing was more graceful nor more amiable than her face when she was at her ease, whether in private or amid persons to whom she was particularly attached."

Marie Louise paid great attention to her son, whom she loved tenderly. He was taken to her every morning, and she kept him with her until it was time to dress. During the day, between a music or a drawing lesson, she used to go and see the little King in his room, and she would do some needlework by his side. Frequently, followed by the nurse, she would take him to the Emperor. The nurse stopped on the threshold

of Napoleon's study, while Marie Louise went in, timidly carrying her son in her arms, for she was always afraid of letting him fall. Then the Emperor would rush towards her, take the child, and cover him with kisses.

To quote the Baron de Méneval once more: "Whether, ensconced on his favourite seat, by the side of a mantelpiece ornamented with the magnificent bronze busts of Scipio and Hannibal, he was occupied in the perusal of an important report; whether, seated at the table, hollowed out in the middle, the sides of which, like wings, were covered with his numerous papers, he was signing a despatch whose every word had to be weighed—his son, on his knee or hugged to his breast, never left him. Endowed with a marvellous power of concentration, he could simultaneously attend to serious matters and take part in the whims of a child. Sometimes, giving truce to the grand thoughts which occupied his mind, he would lie down on the ground by the side of his beloved child, playing with him with all the enjoyment of another child, and attending to all that could amuse him or save him from disappointment."

M. de Méneval also narrates that the Emperor had had a number of bits of mahogany cut of unequal length and different colours, with serrated tops, to represent battalions, regiments, and divisions, and that when he wished to try some new combination of

troops, or some fresh evolution, he made use of these pieces and arranged them on the floor. "Sometimes," adds M. de Méneval, "his son surprised him when seriously occupied with the disposition of these pieces, the prelude to one of those skilful manœuvres which assured him of success in his battles. His son, seated at his side, delighted with the shape and colour of these pieces, which reminded him of his toys, put his hand out every moment and disarranged the order of battle, frequently at the decisive moment and just as the enemy was about to be defeated; but such was the presence of mind of the Emperor and his patience with his son, that he was not in the least annoyed by the disorder produced in his manœuvres, and without exhibiting any annoyance he recommenced the disposition of the pieces. His patience and amiability towards the child were inexhaustible."

Napoleon also showed great kindness to Marie Louise. He did all in his power to ensure a happy and respected life for his young wife. He arranged matters so that matters of etiquette never prevented the Empress from devoting herself daily to her favourite occupations. She dined with him alone every evening, and when he chanced to be absent, the Duchess de Montebello dined with her. After dinner there was generally either a limited reception or a small concert. Marie Louise retired to her rooms at eleven o'clock, and her life was spent with monotonous,

but agreeable regularity. The two residences which she occupied as a rule were Saint Cloud in summer, and the Tuileries in winter. At Saint Cloud, where the Park was a great attraction to her, she slept on the first floor in the room formerly occupied by Marie Antoinette and Josephine. (This room during the reign of Napoleon III. was the Council Chamber.) At the Tuileries her rooms on the ground floor between the Pavillon de l'Horloge and the Pavillon de Flore were the same as those used by the Queen and the first Empress. They looked on to the garden, and were composed of an outer and inner set of rooms. The former comprised an ante-chamber, a first drawing-room, second drawing-room, the Empress's drawing-room, a dining-room, and concert-room; the latter comprised a bedroom, library, dressing-room, bath-room, and boudoir. The same formalities existed in regard to entering the apartments of the Empress as to those of the Emperor. Napoleon lived on the first floor, where he had the same bedroom as Louis XV. and Louis XVI.; but a small private staircase placed his room in communication with that of his wife, whom he incessantly visited.

Marie Louise was on good terms with the Princes and Princesses of the Imperial family, who were less hurt by the superiority of an Archduchess than by that of a woman who, like Josephine, had been a private individual. In conformity with the instruc-

tions of her husband, the second Empress was polite and affable to the Imperial family, but without any approach to freedom. None of her sisters-in-law were as intimate with her as the Duchess de Montebello was. An incident, for which Marie Louise was not responsible, infused a certain amount of coolness into her relations with the Princesses, but it was only a passing cloud. Shortly after the birth of the King of Rome, the Emperor noticed that three arm-chairs had been placed near the couch of the Empress—one for his mother, and the other two for the Queens of Spain and Holland. He found fault with this arrangement, remarking that his mother, not being a Queen, was not entitled to an arm-chair, and that no such thing should have been given to anybody. The three arm-chairs were thereupon replaced by three elegant stools. When the three Princesses next entered the room they noticed the alteration with displeasure, and left the room in a few moments. They would have been very wrong in being angry with the young Sovereign for it, because it had been done at the wish of the Emperor; and when Napoleon gave an order, nobody, not even his wife, would have thought of making the least observation. In regard to etiquette, the minutest details were regulated by him, and he attached the utmost importance to them. This little incident had no consequences, and as a rule the members of the Imperial family behaved far better to the second Empress than they did to the first.

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and not for dominion. She had then nothing wherewith to reproach either her destiny or herself. As daughter, wife, and mother she had nothing to wish for. Her satisfaction was increased by the thought that she was soon going to once more see her father, her family, her country, and, putting aside all question of sentiment, it was impossible for her not to be flattered by the idea that she would reappear in Austria with a brilliancy and splendour possessed in the same degree by no other woman in the world. The stay of the young Sovereign in Dresden was going to be the height of her ephemeral greatness, the end of that rapid, but dazzling period of prosperity and happiness which may be called the happy days of the Empress Marie Louise.

To sum up, what did Marie Louise lack at the beginning of 1812? She had a husband who, at the zenith of his fame and glory, showed her more affection, greater regard, and more forethought than any other person in the world. She was the mother of a superb child, who was the admiration of all. Around her she saw only profoundly respectful faces. As lady-in-waiting she had a real friend, a lady whom she would have chosen from among all, so highly did she appreciate her disposition and manner. Her household was composed of the flower of the best French society. She indulged her tastes without hindrance, studied the arts under the best masters, was as charitable as she liked, and inhabited the most beautiful residences in the Empire. In her position there was nothing distressing or difficult—no conflicting duties, no hesitation between a father and a husband, or between a native and an adopted country; none of those private struggles, painful circumstances, and perplexities full of anguish which subsequently became so cruel. Then the Emperor Francis professed himself very satisfied with his son-in-law, and the most friendly correspondence was carried on between them. At this truly happy period the Frenchwoman could be Austrian without failing either in her mission or her duty. The path she had to follow was clearly marked out. Alas! not for long was she to enjoy this calm and regular happiness, which was so thoroughly suited to her nature, made for obedience

and not for dominion. She had then nothing wherewith to reproach either her destiny or herself. As daughter, wife, and mother she had nothing to wish for. Her satisfaction was increased by the thought that she was soon going to once more see her father, her family, her country, and, putting aside all question of sentiment, it was impossible for her not to be flattered by the idea that she would reappear in Austria with a brilliancy and splendour possessed in the same degree by no other woman in the world. The stay of the young Sovereign in Dresden was going to be the height of her ephemeral greatness, the end of that rapid, but dazzling period of prosperity and happiness which may be called the happy days of the Empress Marie Louise.

CHAPTER IX.

DRESDEN.

THE *Moniteur* of the 10th of May, 1812, published the following information: "Paris, May 9. The Emperor left to-day to make an inspection of the Great Army, concentrated on the Vistula. H.M. the Empress will accompany his Majesty as far as Dresden, where she hopes to have the happiness of seeing her august family. She will return in July at the latest. H.M. the King of Rome will spend the summer at Meudon, where he has been for the past month. The King has completely got over his teething, and enjoys the most perfect health. He will be weaned at the end of the month."

It will be conceded that it was a somewhat strange thing thus to announce in the same paragraph the weaning of a child, and the commencement of the most gigantic expedition of modern times. The word "war" had not yet been pronounced. Never had a

announce to you that if we have war, he will take me to Dresden, where I shall remain for two months, and where he hopes also to see you. You cannot imagine, my dear father, the pleasure which this hope causes me. I am sure you will not deny me the joy of bringing to me dear mamma and my brothers and sisters. But, I beg of you, my dear papa, do not say a word about it yet, for it is not settled." Marie Louise arrived in Saxony at the height of her happiness. At that moment she was really proud of being the wife of Napoleon. She made her entry with him within the walls of Dresden at eleven o'clock on the evening of the 16th of May, 1812. They were escorted by the King and Queen of Saxony, who had gone as far as Freyberg to meet them.

At eight o'clock on the following morning the Emperor Napoleon, who had taken up his abode in the State apartments of the royal castle, received on rising the Sovereign Princes of Saxe Coburg, Saxe Weimar, and Dessau, as well as the Grand Officers of the Saxon Court. The King of Westphalia and the Grand Duke of Würzburg arrived during the day, and at once paid their respects.

At one o'clock in the afternoon of the 18th of May the Emperor and Empress of Austria arrived at Dresden. "What a moment for Marie Louise!" says Madame Durand. "To find herself once more clasped in the arms of her father, and to reappear before the

dazzled eyes of her family, the happiest of wives and the first of Sovereigns ! Her august father could not conceal the deep emotion which he felt; he tenderly embraced his son-in-law, and recognising the rights he had over his heart, was good enough to repeat that he could count upon him and Austria for the triumph of the common cause." These assurances were not perhaps very sincere, but Napoleon believed, or pretended to believe them. As for Marie Louise, who never paid any attention to politics, she was quite happy in the bosom of her family.

The time of the stay of Napoleon in Dresden was the zenith of his power. Never perhaps had mortal been raised to such a height as this new Agamemnon. "At Dresden," says Chateaubriand, "he collected the scattered efforts of the Confederation of the Rhine, and for the first and last time he set in motion the machine he had constructed. Among the exiled masterpieces which regret the Italian sun, the meeting of the Emperor Napoleon, the Empress Marie Louise, and a crowd of Sovereigns, great and small, took place. These Sovereigns aspired to form, out of their various Courts, circles subordinate to the principal Court; they disputed among themselves for vassalage. One wanted to be the cup-bearer of the lieutenant of Brienne, another his pantler. The history of Charlemagne was laid under contribution for the instruction of the German officials. The greater the

departure for an army seemed more like a pleasure trip. Accompanied by the greater part of the Court, Napoleon, like a Darius or a Louis XIV., left Saint Cloud on the 9th of May in the same carriage as the Empress. The Republican General gave way to a sumptuous Monarch, surrounded by Asiatic pomp. The idea of the possibility of a reverse never entered the mind of anybody. It might have been said that it was a mere question of a long ovation, a triumphal tour.

The all-powerful Emperor, accompanied by his young wife, tasted, so to speak, the enjoyment of his grandeur and glory at every step. On the 9th of May he slept at Châlons; on the 10th he entered Metz, and immediately after his arrival he got on horseback, reviewed the troops, and visited the fortifications. On the 11th he was at Mayence, where he received the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Hesse Darmstadt, and the Prince of Anhalt-Cœthen. On the 13th he crossed the Rhine, stopped for a moment at the residence of the Prince Primate, at Aschaffenburg, met during the day the King of Würtemberg, and the Grand Duke of Baden, and spent the night at Würzburg, whose Sovereign, formerly Grand Duke of Tuscany, was the brother of the Emperor of Austria. Marie Louise was delighted to see her uncle, who rejoined her at Dresden. On the 14th they slept at Bayreuth, on the 15th at Plauen, and on the 16th arrived at Dresden.

As M. Thiers says, Napoleon crossed Germany amid an unheard-of concourse of German people, with whom curiosity outweighed hatred. "As a matter of fact the potentate whom they detested had never appeared surrounded by more *prestige.* Men spoke with a kind of surprise and terror of the 600,000 men who had flocked at his bidding from all parts of Europe; projects were attributed to him, extraordinary after a very different fashion from those he had conceived; he was stated to be going through Russia to India; and thus were spread a thousand fables a hundred times more foolish than his actual plans, and there was almost a belief in their accomplishment, so greatly had his constant successes discouraged hatred from hoping for what it wished in regard to him. Vast piles of wood had been prepared along the line of march, and at nightfall they were lighted so as to illuminate his progress, and the feeling of curiosity almost produced the transports of love and joy."

The idea of the Emperor in going to Dresden was to stay there for two or three weeks before going to put himself at the head of his armies, and fascinate all Europe by holding in the Saxon capital a Court more sumptuous than those of all the other Sovereigns. For some weeks past Marie Louise had been cherishing the hope of seeing her father again at Dresden, and this thought filled her with joy. On the 15th of March she had written to him: "The Emperor sends a thousand amiable messages. He bids me also

troops, or some fresh evolution, he made use of these pieces and arranged them on the floor. "Sometimes," adds M. de Méneval, "his son surprised him when seriously occupied with the disposition of these pieces, the prelude to one of those skilful manœuvres which assured him of success in his battles. His son, seated at his side, delighted with the shape and colour of these pieces, which reminded him of his toys, put his hand out every moment and disarranged the order of battle, frequently at the decisive moment and just as the enemy was about to be defeated; but such was the presence of mind of the Emperor and his patience with his son, that he was not in the least annoyed by the disorder produced in his manœuvres, and without exhibiting any annoyance he recommenced the disposition of the pieces. His patience and amiability towards the child were inexhaustible."

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but agreeable regularity. The two residences which she occupied as a rule were Saint Cloud in summer, and the Tuileries in winter. At Saint Cloud, where the Park was a great attraction to her, she slept on the first floor in the room formerly occupied by Marie Antoinette and Josephine. (This room during the reign of Napoleon III. was the Council Chamber.) At the Tuileries her rooms on the ground floor between the Pavillon de l'Horloge and the Pavillon de Flore were the same as those used by the Queen and the first Empress. They looked on to the garden, and were composed of an outer and inner set of rooms. The former comprised an ante-chamber, a first drawing-room, second drawing-room, the Empress's drawing-room, a dining-room, and concert-room; the latter comprised a bedroom, library, dressing-room, bath-room, and boudoir. The same formalities existed in regard to entering the apartments of the Empress as to those of the Emperor. Napoleon lived on the first floor, where he had the same bedroom as Louis XV. and Louis XVI.; but a small private staircase placed his room in communication with that of his wife, whom he incessantly visited.

Marie Louise was on good terms with the Princes and Princesses of the Imperial family, who were less hurt by the superiority of an Archduchess than by that of a woman who, like Josephine, had been a private individual. In conformity with the instruc-

tions of her husband, the second Empress was polite and affable to the Imperial family, but without any approach to freedom. None of her sisters-in-law were as intimate with her as the Duchess de Montebello was. An incident, for which Marie Louise was not responsible, infused a certain amount of coolness into her relations with the Princesses, but it was only a passing cloud. Shortly after the birth of the King of Rome, the Emperor noticed that three arm-chairs had been placed near the couch of the Empress—one for his mother, and the other two for the Queens of Spain and Holland. He found fault with this arrangement, remarking that his mother, not being a Queen, was not entitled to an arm-chair, and that no such thing should have been given to anybody. The three arm-chairs were thereupon replaced by three elegant stools. When the three Princesses next entered the room they noticed the alteration with displeasure, and left the room in a few moments. They would have been very wrong in being angry with the young Sovereign for it, because it had been done at the wish of the Emperor; and when Napoleon gave an order, nobody, not even his wife, would have thought of making the least observation. In regard to etiquette, the minutest details were regulated by him, and he attached the utmost importance to them. This little incident had no consequences, and as a rule the members of the Imperial family behaved far better to the second Empress than they did to the first.

To sum up, what did Marie Louise lack at the beginning of 1812? She had a husband who, at the zenith of his fame and glory, showed her more affection, greater regard, and more forethought than any other person in the world. She was the mother of a superb child, who was the admiration of all. Around her she saw only profoundly respectful faces. As lady-in-waiting she had a real friend, a lady whom she would have chosen from among all, so highly did she appreciate her disposition and manner. Her household was composed of the flower of the best French society. She indulged her tastes without hindrance, studied the arts under the best masters, was as charitable as she liked, and inhabited the most beautiful residences in the Empire. In her position there was nothing distressing or difficult—no conflicting duties, no hesitation between a father and a husband, or between a native and an adopted country; none of those private struggles, painful circumstances, and perplexities full of anguish which subsequently became so cruel. Then the Emperor Francis professed himself very satisfied with his son-in-law, and the most friendly correspondence was carried on between them. At this truly happy period the Frenchwoman could be Austrian without failing either in her mission or her duty. The path she had to follow was clearly marked out. Alas! not for long was she to enjoy this calm and regular happiness, which was so thoroughly suited to her nature, made for obedience

and not for dominion. She had then nothing wherewith to reproach either her destiny or herself. As daughter, wife, and mother she had nothing to wish for. Her satisfaction was increased by the thought that she was soon going to once more see her father, her family, her country, and, putting aside all question of sentiment, it was impossible for her not to be flattered by the idea that she would reappear in Austria with a brilliancy and splendour possessed in the same degree by no other woman in the world. The stay of the young Sovereign in Dresden was going to be the height of her ephemeral greatness, the end of that rapid, but dazzling period of prosperity and happiness which may be called the happy days of the Empress Marie Louise.

CHAPTER IX.

DRESDEN.

THE *Moniteur* of the 10th of May, 1812, published the following information: "Paris, May 9. The Emperor left to-day to make an inspection of the Great Army, concentrated on the Vistula. H.M. the Empress will accompany his Majesty as far as Dresden, where she hopes to have the happiness of seeing her august family. She will return in July at the latest. H.M. the King of Rome will spend the summer at Meudon, where he has been for the past month. The King has completely got over his teething, and enjoys the most perfect health. He will be weaned at the end of the month."

It will be conceded that it was a somewhat strange thing thus to announce in the same paragraph the weaning of a child, and the commencement of the most gigantic expedition of modern times. The word "war" had not yet been pronounced. Never had a

her birth and her crown. In Napoleon she merely saw an upstart, a glorious adventurer, the author of the humiliations of all kinds heaped upon the Austrian Monarchy; and the splendour which surrounded the hero of Marengo, Austerlitz, and Wagram aroused in her a feeling of contempt all the stronger because she was obliged to conceal it. Napoleon, interested in the game, resolved to subjugate the stepmother of his wife.

The health of the Empress of Austria was so unsatisfactory that she could not bear the fatigue of the somewhat long walk to and from her rooms. Napoleon would walk beside her holding his hat in one hand and resting the other on her Sedan chair, chatting all the time in the most sprightly way with his witty enemy. General de Ségur, like everybody else, noticed the hostility which the Empress vainly endeavoured to conceal. "The Empress of Austria," he said, "whose ancestors General Bonaparte had dispossessed in Italy, distinguished herself by her aversion, which she could not disguise; it escaped her in first impulses which Napoleon perceived and smilingly subdued; but she employed her wit and grace in quietly instilling hatred in the hearts she influenced."

At heart the Empress of Austria was jealous of the Empress of the French. Remembering the time when she had control over her, she was annoyed at seeing her take precedence over all other Sovereigns. She

As M. Thiers says, Napoleon crossed Germany amid an unheard-of concourse of German people, with whom curiosity outweighed hatred. "As a matter of fact the potentate whom they detested had never appeared surrounded by more *prestige*. Men spoke with a kind of surprise and terror of the 600,000 men who had flocked at his bidding from all parts of Europe; projects were attributed to him, extraordinary after a very different fashion from those he had conceived; he was stated to be going through Russia to India; and thus were spread a thousand fables a hundred times more foolish than his actual plans, and there was almost a belief in their accomplishment, so greatly had his constant successes discouraged hatred from hoping for what it wished in regard to him. Vast piles of wood had been prepared along the line of march, and at nightfall they were lighted so as to illuminate his progress, and the feeling of curiosity almost produced the transports of love and joy."

The idea of the Emperor in going to Dresden was to stay there for two or three weeks before going to put himself at the head of his armies, and fascinate all Europe by holding in the Saxon capital a Court more sumptuous than those of all the other Sovereigns. For some weeks past Marie Louise had been cherishing the hope of seeing her father again at Dresden, and this thought filled her with joy. On the 15th of March she had written to him: "The Emperor sends a thousand amiable messages. He bids me also

devoted herself solely to draw Marie Louise away by means of the most wicked and malicious insinuations; she was mortified at her want of success in gaining some ascendency over her. Moreover, said the Emperor, she was clever and witty, and quite enough to embarrass her husband, who knew full well that she did not think much of him. Her face was agreeable and piquant, with something about it peculiar to itself; she was a pretty nun."

Napoleon worked hard at Dresden. Workmen came and went incessantly, and the Emperor attended with active and minute care, to all the political and military details of the immense expedition he was preparing. Marie Louise, anxious to profit by the least leisure her husband allowed himself, scarcely dared leave the Palace, and the Empress of Austria, her step-mother, attempted to persuade her that this assiduity was ridiculous.

There was, moreover, a sort of hidden rivalry between the two Sovereigns. Napoleon had the Crown diamonds brought to Dresden, and Marie Louise was literally covered with them. General de Ségur says in connection with this: "She effaced her step-mother by the brilliancy of her diamonds. If Napoleon made a point of less ostentation, she resisted, even wept, and the Emperor yielded either from affection, fatigue, or distraction. It is also stated that, in spite of her origin, this Princess con-

dazzled eyes of her family, the happiest of wives and the first of Sovereigns ! Her august father could not conceal the deep emotion which he felt; he tenderly embraced his son-in-law, and recognising the rights he had over his heart, was good enough to repeat that he could count upon him and Austria for the triumph of the common cause." These assurances were not perhaps very sincere, but Napoleon believed, or pretended to believe them. As for Marie Louise, who never paid any attention to politics, she was quite happy in the bosom of her family.

The time of the stay of Napoleon in Dresden was the zenith of his power. Never perhaps had mortal been raised to such a height as this new Agamemnon. "At Dresden," says Chateaubriand, "he collected the scattered efforts of the Confederation of the Rhine, and for the first and last time he set in motion the machine he had constructed. Among the exiled masterpieces which regret the Italian sun, the meeting of the Emperor Napoleon, the Empress Marie Louise, and a crowd of Sovereigns, great and small, took place. These Sovereigns aspired to form, out of their various Courts, circles subordinate to the principal Court; they disputed among themselves for vassalage. One wanted to be the cup-bearer of the lieutenant of Brienne, another his pantler. The history of Charlemagne was laid under contribution for the instruction of the German officials. The greater the

promotion, the greater the rejoicing. A de Montmorency, says Bonaparte in Las Cases, would have rushed in hot haste to tie the Empress's shoes." The Sovereigns were more like the courtiers than the equals of Napoleon. Princes and private individuals, rich and poor, nobles and plebeians, friends and enemies, crowded to see him. An immense crowd spent their days and nights with their eyes fixed on the door or the windows of the Palace where the elect being resided, in the hope of saying, "I have seen him!" The French waited on him with idolatry. The Germans had a complex feeling for him, in which admiration was even stronger than hatred.

General de Ségur, who was at Dresden with Napoleon, represents him as being moderate and even anxious to please, but with evident effort, and allowing the fatigue he felt to be seen. As for the German Princes, their attitude, their words, and even the sound of their voices, bore witness to the ascendency he had over them. They were all of them there for him alone. They scarcely entered into any discussion, being always ready to recognise the superiority which was already too apparent to him. "His levée," adds the General, "presented a remarkable sight. Sovereign Princes waited for an audience from the Conqueror of Europe; they were mixed up to such an extent with his officers that the latter were frequently on their guard lest they should accidentally brush up against

these new courtiers and be confounded with them. Thus Napoleon made all distinctions disappear; he was as much their chief as ours. This common dependence seemed to level everything around him. Then, perhaps, the military pride, hardly restrained, of some French Generals wounded these Princes; the Generals thought themselves above them, for at all events, whatever may be the nobility and rank of the conquered, the conqueror is his equal."

On the 18th of May, the day of the arrival of the Emperor and Empress of Austria, the King of Saxony invited his guests to dinner. But on all other days Napoleon invested himself with the duties of hospitality, as if he were at home in Dresden. He wished to receive, and not to be received. The Sovereigns ate at his table, and he arranged the hour and all the details of etiquette. Not wishing his stay to be inconvenient to the King of Saxony, who was not rich, he arranged that his own household should precede and follow him, provided with everything necessary for his magnificent state. A portion of the splendid silver gilt service, presented to him by the City of Paris on the occasion of his marriage, had been brought to Dresden, and the luxury there was as great as at the Tuileries.

When he went to St. Helena the vanquished conqueror recalled the remembrance of these past splendours with pleasure. "The interview at

Dresden," it is said in the *Memorial*, "was the period of Napoleon's greatest power. There he appeared as the king of kings. He was compelled to insist upon some mark of recognition being paid to the Emperor of Austria, his father-in-law. This Sovereign had no household with him, neither had the King of Prussia, nor Alexander at Tilsit or at Erfurt. There, as at Dresden, Napoleon was the host. These Courts, said the Emperor, were paltry and second rate; he arranged the etiquette and imparted the tone; he made Francis pass before him, and the latter was in ecstasy. The luxury of Napoleon and his magnificence made him appear like some Asiatic monarch. There, as at Dresden, he covered all who approached him with diamonds." He had summoned the best actors from the Théâtre Français, and Talma acted, as at Erfurt, to a pit of kings.

What were the genuine sentiments of the Princes who displayed so much obsequiousness towards Napoleon? The King of Saxony, that patriarch of Sovereigns, a very frank man, very loyal and very true to his word, was absolutely sincere in the devotion he professed for the Emperor, whose debtor he always considered himself. Napoleon, who had a great affection for this Prince, would not have any other guards at Dresden but Saxon soldiers. Even after Leipsic he had a kindly recollection of it, and at St. Helena he replied to those who alluded to his

successive confidence: "I was then in the midst of so good a family, and with such brave men that I ran no risk; they all loved me, and at this very time I am sure that the good King of Saxony daily says a *Pater* and an *Ave* for me."

In contrast with the Saxon Monarch, the Emperor of Austria, in spite of family ties, had only a very limited affection for Napoleon. Metternich, who was at Dresden, says in his Memoirs: "The attitude of the two Sovereigns was in conformity with their respective positions, but very cold." M. Thiers represents the Emperor Francis as opening his arms almost frankly to his son-in-law, displaying a kind of inconsequence more common than one imagines, balanced between the pleasure of seeing his daughter so great, and his regret at Austria being so diminished, promising Napoleon his help after having sent to Alexander to say that the help would amount to nothing, telling himself that after all he had acted wisely in guaranteeing himself at once against the success of both adversaries, but nevertheless believing far more in that of Napoleon and seeking to profit by it in advance.

As for the Empress of Austria, the stepmother of Marie Louise, she concealed under a polished and perfectly correct exterior a profound antipathy for the conqueror. It needed a formal order from her husband to bring her to Dresden at all. She was then a pretty woman of twenty-four, witty and proud of

her birth and her crown. In Napoleon she merely saw an upstart, a glorious adventurer, the author of the humiliations of all kinds heaped upon the Austrian Monarchy; and the splendour which surrounded the hero of Marengo, Austerlitz, and Wagram aroused in her a feeling of contempt all the stronger because she was obliged to conceal it. Napoleon, interested in the game, resolved to subjugate the stepmother of his wife.

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would have liked to have been able, as formerly, to give her advice and perhaps even to criticise her with all the authority of a step-mother. But she dared not, and this reserve was not pleasing to her. Strict examination will unfold petty jealousies in the inner life of Sovereigns as well as in plebeian households. La Bruyère makes that observation: "In the Court and in the town there are the same passions, the same weaknesses, the same pettinesses, the same caprices, the same quarrels in families and between relations, the same envyings, the same antipathies; everywhere there are daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law, husbands and wives, divorces, ruptures, and unsatisfactory reconciliations; everywhere temper, anger, partiality, gossip, and backbiting. A clear eyesight will easily see the little town, the Rue Saint Dénis transported, as it were, to Versailles and Fontainebleau."

The Count de Las Cases says in the *Memorial:* "One of us took the liberty of asking if the Empress of Austria was not the sworn foe of Marie Louise. Neither more nor less, said the Emperor, than a petty Court hatred, a detestation at heart, but concealed under daily letters of four pages full of tenderness and endearments. The Empress of Austria was particularly attentive to Napoleon, and was particularly coquettish with him so long as he was present; but as soon as his back was turned, she

devoted herself solely to draw Marie Louise away by means of the most wicked and malicious insinuations; she was mortified at her want of success in gaining some ascendency over her. Moreover, said the Emperor, she was clever and witty, and quite enough to embarrass her husband, who knew full well that she did not think much of him. Her face was agreeable and piquant, with something about it peculiar to itself; she was a pretty nun."

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trived to mortify German vanity by inconsiderate comparisons between her old and her new country. Napoleon complained of it, but quietly. The patriotism which he had inspired pleased him; he thought he could compensate for her imprudences by presents." The Empress of Austria, compelled to restrain herself, concealed her displeasure. She was present nearly every morning at the toilette of Marie Louise, ransacked the lace, ribbons, silks, shawls, and jewels of her wealthy step-daughter, and invariably carried off something.

The Emperor Francis affected not to perceive the jealousy between his wife and daughter. He spent the greater part of the day in walking quietly about the town, and was somewhat astonished at the excessive labour which his indefatigable son-in-law accomplished. He thought he would make himself agreeable to the all-powerful Emperor by telling him that in the middle ages the Bonaparte family reigned in Treviso, that he was quite sure of it, and that he himself had inspected all the authentic documents in proof of it. Napoleon replied that he did not want to know anything about it, and that he would much rather be the Rudolph of Hapsburg of his race. This little genealogical flattery had its full effect, and Marie Louise could not but be pleased with it.

Napoleon was on the point of leaving Dresden when Frederick William, King of Prussia, appeared there.

By a treaty signed on the 24th of February, 1812, this Prince had engaged to furnish for the forthcoming campaign 20,000 men under the direct command of a Prussian General, but subject to the instructions of the Chief of the French Corps d'Armée with which they were serving. By a treaty, concluded on the 14th of March, Austria had undertaken to furnish a corps of 30,000 men, commanded by an Austrian General under the orders of Napoleon. Prussia suffered in an altogether peculiar manner from such a state of things, and never had the recollection of Jena been more vivid or more acute. The occupation of Spandau and Pillau by the French, and the destruction caused in the kingdom by the passage of the troops on their march towards Russia, had raised the anxiety and annoyance of Frederick William to an extreme pitch, and he thought that Napoleon was bent on dethroning him. Attaching the greatest value to prompt information in regard to his fate, he despatched to Dresden M. de Hatzfeld, the great Prussian nobleman whom Napoleon wished to have shot in 1806, but whom since then he had taken into singular favour, which proves, as M. Thiers says, that one should not be in a hurry to shoot people. The King of Prussia solicited, through the mediation of M. de Hatzfeld, an interview with the Emperor at Berlin. Napoleon replied that Berlin was not on his line of march, that he could not go there, but that he should be happy to see the King at Dresden.

Frederick William looked upon the invitation as an order, and started at once. He arrived in the Saxon capital on the 26th of May accompanied by Baron de Hardenberg and Count de Goltz, Ministers of State, the Prince de Witgenstein, Grand Chamberlain, M. de Jagow, Chief Equerry, and Baron de Krusmmarck, Minister of Prussia in Paris, and he was joined on the following day, the 27th of May, by the Prince Royal. Father and son were received very favourably. Napoleon agreed to include in the account current with Prussia all provisions seized from the inhabitants by the troops on the march, and promised a considerable territorial indemnity to the kingdom should the war against Russia be successful. On his side the King proposed that the Emperor should take with him the Prince Royal as Aide-de-camp, and even placed himself in communication with the Aides-de-camp of Napoleon by bespeaking their friendship for their new companion in arms. As the Baron de Bausset, who in his capacity as Prefect of the Palace was present at the Dresden interview, says in his Memoirs: "All that has been written in regard to the coolness with which the King of Prussia was received, is false and lying. He was received as he had a right to expect, and as was the due of a powerful ally who, in accordance with a recent treaty, was about to unite his troops to those of France." The young Prince Royal, who was making his first appearance in the world, was remarkable for his elegant and distinguished appearance. As for the

King, he pretended a satisfaction of which the following curious despatch was the official expression.

Nothing could more clearly prove the ascendency acquired by Napoleon than this circular, addressed on the 2nd of June, 1812, by the Count de Goltz to the diplomatic agents of Prussia: "Sir,—It will be of great interest to you to be correctly informed of the principal circumstances of the journey which the King, our Sovereign, has just made to Dresden. Having had the honour of accompanying his Majesty there, I have great pleasure in utilising the first moments after my return in communicating them to you. On receipt of a letter from H.M. the Emperor Napoleon, which the King received on the 24th by the hands of the Count de Saint Marsan, containing the most courteous and most friendly invitation to see that Sovereign at Dresden, his Majesty resolved to set out at once, and starting at daybreak on the 25th he arrived that evening at Grossenhayn, whither H.M. the King of Saxony had sent Lieutenant de Zeschaud and Colonel de Reisky to meet him.

"His entry into Dresden took place at ten o'clock on the morning of the 26th. A formal entry was proposed, but his Majesty thought it better to decline the honours which were ready to be paid to him. Nevertheless, a squadron of cavalry of the Body Guard met his Majesty full a quarter of a league from the town, and escorted him as far as the palace of Prince

Antoine, where his residence was fixed, amid a countless multitude of spectators, who with one accord lavished on the King the most signal marks of their respectful devotion.

"His Majesty was received at the foot of the staircase in the most flattering manner by the King of Saxony, attended by all his Court, his Ministry, and the most distinguished persons of the town. After a short interview in the King's apartments, his Majesty sent to announce his visit to the two Emperors, who replied in the most friendly way that they would visit him. The Emperor Napoleon arrived first, and the two Sovereigns having embraced, a conversation ensued between them, which lasted more than half an hour. The Emperor of Austria arrived immediately afterwards, and his Majesty received from him a most warm and friendly welcome."

The Prussian Minister, displaying unreserved satisfaction, is not sparing of his praise in regard to the courtesy and kindly behaviour of Napoleon. He concludes his circular despatch thus: "I must refrain from entering into further details in regard to the reception of our Sovereign, the subsequent interviews, and the Court ceremonies and *fêtes* which took place on the first and following days; but I am, as an eye-witness, both able and bound to add that as a whole nothing could have evidenced more forethought for friendship than this reception at the hands equally of

H.M. the Emperor Napoleon, their Majesties the Emperor of Austria and the King of Saxony and their august families, and the King appreciated it extremely. The friendship and personal confidence of these Sovereigns, and their reciprocal convictions of the sincerity of their dispositions are assured in the most lasting manner, and in particular the near relations between our Sovereign and the Emperor Napoleon have assumed a fresh character of cordiality and strength. It remains for me to remark that H.R.H. the Prince Royal, who arrived at Dresden on the 27th, also won the unanimous approval of the assembled Sovereigns, and the Emperor Napoleon received him with the most affectionate cordiality." The Count de Goltz evidently believed all he heard. The concluding sentence in his despatch runs thus: "Although, sir, these details are principally for you, it is understood that you are at liberty to impart them wherever it may be desirable." Possibly this sentence also meant that wherever these details might not be agreeable, that is to say, among the friends of Russia or England, there was no necessity for divulging them.

At heart there was not a single Prussian who had forgotten Jena, not one who did not ardently long for revenge. King Frederick William, who had at first resolved upon retiring to Silesia, in order not to remain at Potsdam under the guns of Spandau, or at Berlin under the authority of a French governor, consented

to return to his habitual residence. But although his Minister, the Count de Goltz, represented him as being "infinitely satisfied with the precious days he had spent at Dresden, and really touched by the repeated proofs of friendship, esteem, and attachment which he had received there," this Sovereign, while bending before the exigencies of the time being, was only waiting for a favourable opportunity to rejoin the front rank of the enemies of his conqueror. In 1816 Napoleon summed him up as follows: "The King of Prussia, as a private individual, is loyal, good, and honest; but in his political capacity he is a man naturally bending to necessity; with him you are master just as long as you have strength and an upraised arm."

The thinking men who surrounded Napoleon at Dresden were under no delusion in regard to the real sentiments of Germany and nearly all its Princes. "The wisest of us were afraid," says General de Ségur. "We said, but under our breath, that we might well believe ourselves to be supernatural to change the nature of everything and thus displace everything without fearing lest we ourselves should be drawn into the universal overthrow. We saw these Monarchs leave the palace of Napoleon with eye and breast filled with the bitterest resentment. We thought we heard them at night, when alone with their Ministers, relieving their hearts of the innumerable vexations which they had been compelled to devour. Everything had

embittered their grief. How irksome was the crowd through which they had to make their way to reach the door of their superb ruler; everything, even their own people, seemed to betray them. In proclaiming his good fortune was not their own misfortune insulted? They had come there to Dresden to enhance the brilliancy of the triumph of Napoleon! For he was triumphing over them. Each shout of admiration for him was a shout of reproach against them; his grandeur was their abasement, his victories their defeats! They thus spread abroad their bitterness, and each day hatred created for itself a deeper dwelling-place in their bosoms."

The Duke de Bassano, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, was not alive to the latent hostility, so carefully concealed under protestations of devotion. On the 27th of May, 1812, he wrote to Count Otto, the French Ambassador in Vienna: "Their Imperial and Royal Majesties will probably leave Dresden the day after to-morrow. Their stay in this town has been marked by reciprocal evidences of the most perfect intelligence and the greatest intimacy. To-day the two Emperors know and appreciate each other. The embarrassment and timidity of the Emperor of Austria have given way before the frankness and natural disposition of Napoleon. Long conversations have taken place between the two Sovereigns. In them the interests of the Emperor of Austria have been considered, and I think the Emperor Francis will have

reaped from his journey a more thorough confidence in the sentiments of the Emperor Napoleon towards him, and a rich harvest of good advice."

In spite of his optimisms, the Minister of Foreign Affairs could not help noticing the secret sentiments of the Empress of Austria. After having said, in his despatch to Count Otto, that the Emperor Francis had seen with his own eyes how happy the Empress Marie Louise was, he added : "This sight, so pleasing to a father, has produced in another august person more surprise than emotion. However that may be, if the present feeling is not changed, a sensible amelioration will have been obtained, because the illusions inspired and fostered by a spirit of clique will have disappeared." The Duke de Bassano concludes his despatch with the following eulogy on the Prince Royal of Prussia : "The King of Prussia arrived here the day before yesterday. He was followed yesterday by the Prince Royal, who makes his first appearance in the world. He has borne himself with grace and prudence." (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

The *fêtes* at Dresden were nearly over. Not merely the Germans, but the French themselves were beginning to be tired of them. "I curtailed all the ceremonies laid down by etiquette," says the Baron de Bausset, an eye-witness of these so-called rejoicings, "they are the same in every Court. Grand dinners, grand receptions, grand illuminations; for ever on

one's feet, even during the eternal concerts, a few drives and long standing in large rooms; always serious, always on the look out, and for ever engaged in defending one's prerogatives and pretensions. These pleasures, so envied and so sighed after, have been reduced almost to this. All this outward show of pretended distractions concealed the gravest care and the keenest anxiety."

Napoleon was anxious that the Dresden interview should maintain a pacific character. Possibly he even had a momentary hope that the Czar, intimidated by the display of power which surrounded the Emperor of the French, King of Italy, Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine, Ally of Austria and Prussia, would accept every condition enacted by so great a potentate, and would renounce the struggle before undertaking it. The military element seemed to be relegated to the rear rank. Court dresses were more numerous at Dresden than uniforms. Napoleon looked more like a Sovereign than a General. Murat and King Jérome were sent away to the camps. But everybody was fully aware that the storm was coming on. It might have been said that the first guns of a campaign, gigantic above all others, the Russian campaign, were first of all about to confuse, and then to overpower the sounds of bands and orchestras. Rejoicing was on the surface, but war beneath it.

A terrible, a lamentable war, into which the hero of so many battles was rushing headlong, as if he were

drawn onwards by the fascination of the abyss. Sometimes, in the midst of the intoxication of power and pride, some mysterious voice gave him a presage of danger. But by way of reassuring himself he invoked his past victories, and thought of his star. To quote General de Ségur: "It seemed as if, doubting the future, he wrapped himself up in the past, and that he needed his most glorious reminiscences as armour against some great peril. As a matter of fact, then as afterwards, he was conscious that it was necessary to indulge in illusion in regard to the pretended weakness of his rival. At the approach of so great an invasion he hesitated to look upon it as certain because he had no longer faith in his own infallibility, nor had he that warlike assurance which imparts the strength and fire of youth nor that feeling of success which assures it."

Warnings were not lacking. Those of his adherents who knew Russia well, such as the Count de Ségur and the Duke de Vicence, who had been Ambassadors at St. Petersburg, the one under the Kingdom, the other under the Empire, had said to him: "Everything will be against you in this war, and in favour of the Russians there will be love of their country and independence, every interest, public and private, and the secret wishes of our allies. In our favour and against so many obstacles there will be merely glory, devoid of the cupidity which the frightful poverty of the climate could not excite." General Rapp, who commanded at Dantzig, thought it his duty to warn Marshal Davout

of the unfavourable symptoms which he noticed among the German races. "If the French army suffers one single defeat," wrote the General, "there will speedily be nothing but one single revolution from the Rhine to the Niémen." Davout forwarded this information to Napoleon, with this solitary remark: "I recollect, sire, as a matter of fact that in 1809, if it had not been for the miracles of your Majesty at Ratisbon, our situation in Germany would have been very difficult."

The Emperor listened to nothing. He had no idea that the King of Prussia, his pretended ally, had sent a secret message to the Czar: "Do not advance against Napoleon. Draw the French on into the interior of Russia, and let fatigue and hunger do the rest." In the meantime the sun dried the roads, and the grass began to grow. Nature prepared the ground for the mutual extermination of the nations. And it was a curious fact that at the moment when these colossal hecatombs began, Napoleon had no feeling of anger or hate against his adversary, the Russian Sovereign. He considered that war beween Monarchs, that is to say, between brothers by right divine, should not alter their friendship in the least. On the 25th of April, 1812, he had written to the Emperor Alexander: "Your Majesty will permit me to assure you that if fate should render war inevitable between us, it will in no way alter the sentiments with which your Majesty has inspired me, and which are exempt from any vicissitude or alteration."

Ah! what good reason Napoleon had to speak of fate! Was it not fate which by a species of irresistible attraction drew him onward towards the icy steppes where so much power and so much glory were about to be buried beneath the snow? If now and then a sudden and gloomy foreboding crossed his mind, what were such presentiments destined to be in comparison with the terrible reality? What would the conqueror have said if, in the shadowy future, he had seen some vision of his fate? Amid the crowd of courtiers of every nationality which thronged around the great Emperor at Dresden, there was an Austrian General, half-soldier, half-diplomatist, to whom nobody paid any attention. One evening Marie Louise, on her way to the theatre, spoke a few trivial words to him simply because she met him on her way. He was called the Count de Neipperg. How astonished Napoleon would have been if somebody had told him that this unknown officer would one day replace him as the husband of Marie Louise! The youthful Empress would have been no less astonished if anybody had ventured upon so strange a prediction to her. Of these two personages, then so splendid, the all-powerful Emperor and the radiant Empress, in the course of a few years one was destined to be the prisoner of St. Helena, and the other the morganatic wife of a simple Austrian General.

CHAPTER X.

PRAGUE.

On the 29th of May, 1812, at three o'clock in the morning, Napoleon left Dresden to put himself at the head of his armies. He tenderly embraced Marie Louise, who seemed greatly affected at parting from him. At two o'clock on the morning of the 30th he arrived at Glogau, in Silesia, whence he departed for Poland five hours afterwards. The Emperor of Austria spent the whole of the 29th by the side of his daughter to console her for the departure of Napoleon, and he left Dresden in the evening. He went to Prague, where she was to join him in a few days, and where the preparations were to be completed for the brilliant reception which he intended for her. Marie Louise looked forward with rejoicing to passing a few weeks at Prague in the midst of her family, and the Austrian Sovereign, for his part, was acting as a good father as well as a prudent politician, in heaping upon

his daughter attentions and marks of deference by which his son-in-law could not fail to be flattered.

After the departure of her husband and her father, Marie Louise remained for five days more in the capital of Saxony. She utilised them to visit the wonderful Museums of the town, the Castle of Pilnitz, and the fortress of Kœnigstein, situated on a rugged rock on the banks of the Elbe. At daybreak on the 4th of June she left Dresden, accompanied by her uncle, the Grand Duke of Würzburg. The Royal family and Court of Saxony escorted the young Empress to her carriage, which started amid the roar of cannon and the pealing of bells. Her journey was a perpetual ovation. Saxon cuirassiers escorted her to the Austrian frontier. There she found in readiness to receive her Count Kolowrat, Grand Burgrave of Bohemia, and Prince Clary, Chamberlain of the Emperor Francis. A squadron of the Klénau Light Cavalry regiment replaced the Saxon cuirassiers. At noon Marie Louise reached Tœplitz. She rested there a couple of hours, and then went for a drive through the magnificent gardens of the Palace belonging to Prince Clary, into which the public were admitted. She then visited the suburbs, the Turn Park, and Schlassberg. Everywhere along the whole of her route there were triumphal arches, bands of music, and young girls with floral offerings. In the evening the entire town of Tœplitz was illuminated.

The miners came in front of the Palace where the Empress had taken up her abode, and sang one of their songs, each couplet concluding with loud hurrahs and waving of lanterns.

While the Emperor Francis was awaiting his daughter at Prague, he was joined by Count Otto, the French Ambassador in Vienna. This diplomatist sent the following curious despatch to the Duke de Bassano :—"Prague, June 5, 1812. Monseigneur,—I arrived here on the night of the 3rd. The Emperor of Austria had given orders that I was to be conducted with my suite to a residence prepared for me by the side of the Palace. When I alighted I was informed that all the service of the Court, carriages included, was at my disposal. This attention is all the more valuable because there are no resources for foreigners on the mountain on which stands the Castle of Prague. On the following morning the Grand Chamberlain wrote to me to announce that their Majesties would be very glad to receive me in private audience, after which I should have the honour of dining with them. I found the Emperor extremely pleased with all he had seen and heard at Dresden. He congratulated himself on having made the private acquaintance of his august son-in-law, and spoke feelingly of the happiness of his dear Louise. He was impatiently awaiting her arrival at Prague. He was joyfully anticipating the surprise with which she

would behold the picturesque and majestic view of the Castle, overhanging a superb river studded with islands, and the large town brilliantly illuminated. The Empress of the French would enjoy a view unique in its way, and all the more striking in her case because she had never seen Prague. Knowing that the Emperor preferred conversing in German, I spoke to him in that language, and I had reason to congratulate myself on having done so. The Monarch displayed a frankness which charmed me. He told me that he should be delighted to keep his daughter near him as long as she liked to remain at Prague, and that he would take her as far as the frontier. To-morrow, he added, I am going with the Empress to meet her; I shall enjoy every moment she can give me, and I shall part from her with the keenest regret.

"Alluding afterwards to the events of the day, the Emperor told me that he could not understand the conduct of Russia, and that they must have lost their heads at St. Petersburg to think of measuring swords against such a power as France. 'Your army,' he added, 'has at least 100,000 men more than his; you have far more distinguished officers than he has, and your Emperor alone is worth 80,000 men.'"

After the audience of the Emperor Francis came that of the Empress. The Ambassador gives an account of it also, not without remarking upon the systematic reserve maintained by the Sovereign in regard to every-

thing connected, far or near, with politics:—"On my introduction to H.M. the Empress I was accorded the most flattering reception. She made me sit beside her, spoke much of how well she had found our Sovereign looking, and the satisfaction she anticipated from again spending some time with her. The remainder of the conversation turned upon art and literature, to which her Majesty devotes much of her time. This conversation was resumed at table, when her Majesty once more requested me to sit by her side. She infused infinite grace and freedom into this interview, but without overstepping the domain of literature and philosophy, and entirely ignoring the events of the day or those in preparation."

In spite of this shadow so keenly noted by the Ambassador, the tenor of the dispatch is one of great satisfaction. "On leaving the table," he adds, "the Emperor repeated his courteous phrases, and requested several gentlemen present to show me the curiosities of the town and suburbs. He also sent word to me through the Grand Chamberlain that one of the principal boxes in the theatre had been retained for me during my stay. This Court, as a rule quite simple in its routine, will be very magnificent during the stay of the Empress. The Emperor with the leading noblemen of the Court will go to meet her; the guards in the castle and town have been considerably reinforced; the Garde Hongroise have been summoned to Vienna.

The young Imperial family will arrive in the course of to-morrow; grand illuminations, balls, and other festivities are being prepared to celebrate this interesting meeting. I have received another invitation to dine with their Majesties, and everything is ready for the reception of our august Sovereign. The hearts of the good folk of Bohemia fly to meet her. Alluding to the loyalty of this people, the Emperor told me that they would do anything he asked them. General Klenau added that if he were allowed to make use of the influence of St. Népomuc, whose bronze statue is saluted daily by all who cross the bridge of Prague, he would raise 200,000 Bohemians in a very short time. As I have mentioned General Klenau, I ought to add that he is deeply grateful for the kindness shown to him by his Majesty at Dresden. He speaks of it enthusiastically, and regrets not being able to serve under the order of the greatest captain he has ever seen. The Prince and Princess Antoine of Saxony arrived this morning, and are now starting to meet H.M. the Empress." (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

On the 5th of June Marie Louise left Tœplitz for Prague at an early hour. At five o'clock in the evening, a salute of fifty guns announced her arrival at the Montagne Blanche. The Emperor and Empress of Austria, followed by the members of their households in full dress, met her at the Abbey of St.

Marguerite. She got into their carriage and made a triumphant entry into Prague by torchlight with them. The Bohemian capital was resplendent with light. The garrison and trade corporations, drawn up under their respective banners, formed a double line. The Empress of Austria had given up to her step-daughter the right-hand back seat in the carriage, and the Emperor and his brother, the Grand Duke of Würzburg, occupied the front seats. A countless multitude cheered incessantly.

When the procession reached the Castle, Marie Louise, conducted to her rooms by the Emperor and Empress, there found, waiting to congratulate her, the authorities of the town, the Canonesses of the two noble Chapters of the Province, the members of the Court who had not formed part of the procession, and a numerous band of honorary officials chosen by the Emperor from among the most distinguished of the Chamberlains. She dined with her father, the Grand Duke of Würzburg, Prince Antoine of Saxony, the Duchess de Montebello, the Duchess de Bassano, the Count de Montesquiou, &c. The Emperor and Empress yielded to her, at table as in the carriage, the first place, and during the whole of her stay in Prague she received the honours reserved for Austrian Sovereigns on State occasions. Prince Clary was at the head of the household formed for her, which was composed of the Counts de Neipperg, de Nestitz, and

de Clam, Prince d'Auersperg, Prince de Kinsky, and the Counts de Lutzow, de Paar, de Wallis, de Trautmannsdorf, and de Clam-Martinitz.

In a postscript to his despatch of the 5th of June, 1812, from which we have quoted, Count Otto gives the following details of the entry of Marie Louise into Prague: "H.M. the Empress arrived here at seven o'clock in the evening. From 11 a.m. the troops, trade corporations, civil guards, the University, and nearly all the inhabitants of the town turned out to meet her, and formed a line truly interesting by reason of the good spirit and affectionate feelings which animated the multitude. The procession was very imposing and worthy of the two Sovereigns. It was arranged that her Majesty should arrive in an open carriage at walking pace in order to give the countless multitude which thronged the route the satisfaction of seeing her. The entire Court assembled to receive the Empress at the foot of the grand staircase of the Castle. Her Majesty seemed somewhat tired with her journey, and by a slight cold which, however, did not prevent her from being very pleased, or from showing her parents all the satisfaction she experiences from being among them." (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

On the 7th of June the Archduke Charles arrived at Prague. In the evening there was a grand State banquet in the apartments of the Emperor of Austria.

Marie Louise was placed in the centre of the table, having the Emperor on her right and the Empress on her left. This was the place she invariably occupied during their tour, whether in her own rooms, or with her father. She was waited on at the banquet by Prince Clary, who performed the duties of her Grand Chamberlain.

On the same day, the 7th of June, the Duke de Bassano, who was with Napoleon, wrote to Count Otto: "Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, I have the honour to inform you that his Majesty, who left Dresden on the 29th of May, reached Thorn on the 2nd inst. He halted for forty-eight hours at Posen; his Majesty left yesterday at four o'clock for Dantzig, and *en route* will review several corps of his armies. He is in perfect health, and has everywhere received evidences of the enthusiasm and admiration he inspires. The army is magnificent. The rank and file are well set up, and all the corps are remarkable for their fine appearance and discipline. The weather is very fine, the roads have become practicable, and the country abundantly supplies the wants of the army, which consequently has not to draw upon its immense reserves. I propose writing to you twice a week to give you news of his Majesty, and details of the operations of his armies. This information will be of use to you in contradicting any reports that malevolence may be pleased to spread." (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

At Prague festivity succeeded festivity without intermission. On the 10th of June there was a dinner given by the Empress of the French, and a performance at the Grand Theatre of the German drama by Kotzebue, *L'Americain;* on the 11th, a dinner given by the Emperor of Austria; on the 12th, a visit to the Imperial Library, the School of Design, and the Museum of Machinery, and a concert in the evening; on the 16th, the arrival of the Archdukes Antoine and Regnier, and in the afternoon a daylight ball given by the Empress Marie Louise in honour of the three young Archduchesses, her sisters; on the 14th, a walk in the Park of Bubenet; on the 15th, a visit to the gardens of Count Wratislaw, and the residence of the Count de Clam; on the 16th, a country party at the Castle of the Count de Chotek, situated seven leagues from Prague, a trip on the water, return to Prague, and the arrival of the Archduke Albert. On the 18th, the Empress Marie Louise rode in the riding school of the Hôtel Wallenstein.

On this day also the Prince de Ligne arrived, of whom Baron de Bausset says: "This amiable Prince has all the essential qualities which make up the charm of society; he is witty, noble without haughtiness, affectionate, polite, and graceful; his imagination is as quick as it is fertile; his conversation animated, though quiet and in the best possible taste; he is always saying clever things, making amusing remarks which hurt nobody, or telling good stories, or

recounting interesting reminiscences. His face is handsome, his countenance noble, his manner simple and natural, and his stature very tall. One begins invariably by loving him, and one ends by loving him more."

The evening of the 18th of June was taken up with a magnificent ball given by the Count de Kolowrat, the Grand Burgrave of Bohemia. The 19th, the arrival of the Archduke Joseph, Palatine of Hungary; the 20th, visit to the grotto of St. Procope, so savage and picturesque in the midst of woods and rocks; the 21st, reception of the Princes of Mecklenburg and Hesse Homburg, a State dinner and a grand ball at the castle. The 22nd, Marie Louise rode with her father who, seeing that the horse she was riding pleased her, made her a present of it. Marie Louise called the horse Haradshim, the name of the mountain on which the Castle of Prague is built. The 23rd, visit to the hermitage of St. Yvan, and the old castle of Carlstein; the 24th, state performance at the Grand Theatre; the 25th, arrival of the Archduke Rodolphe; the 26th, arrival of the young Archdukes Ferdinand and Maximilian, and a ball given by the Empress of the French; the 27th, banquet given by the Emperor of Austria; the 30th, a *fête* at the Ile des Arquebusiers, embarkation at half-past six in the evening on the right bank of the Moldau, and landing at the end of the island, where a triumphal arch had

been erected and young girls strewed the path of their Majesties with flowers.

On the 1st of July Marie Louise, accompanied by the Emperor her father, left Prague at six a.m. The garrison and the civil guard were under arms. The nobility belonging to the Court escorted the Empress of the French to her carriage, and amid the roar of cannon and the pealing of bells, the young Sovereign departed, followed by the cheers and blessings of the crowd. She slept that night at Schœffen, and on the following day, the 2nd of July, at Carlsbad; on the 4th, she visited the tin mines of Franckentall; she went down in an arm-chair to a depth of 600 feet, the chair was drawn up, and the Emperor Francis went down, and so on with all the ladies, each in her turn; on the 5th, departure from Carlsbad, and arrival at Frantzbrun, dances and national music. On the 6th, Marie Louise parted from her father, whom she was destined not to see again until after the fall of the Empire; she slept at Bamberg in the Palace of Duke William of Bavaria. On the following day, the 7th, she arrived at Würzburg, where the Grand Duke, her uncle, gave her a magnificent reception. After some races at the Castle of Verneck, many water parties, illuminations, and concerts conducted by the Grand Duke himself, she pursued her journey. She arrived at Saint Cloud on the 18th of July, 1812. On the same day at half-past six in the evening the guns

of the Invalides informed the Parisians that the Empress had returned.

Marie Louise, who was only a little more than twenty years of age, had been Empress of the French and Queen of Italy for two years and four months. In thought she could once more go over all that had happened since her pathetic departure from Vienna; the interesting ceremony of the handing over at Braunau; her first interview with Napoleon in front of the Church at Courcelles; her triumphant entry into Paris by the avenue of the Champs Elysées; her brilliant marriage in the square-room of the Tuileries; the splendid festivities, trips, and continual ovations; the ball at the Austrian Embassy, a sinister presage in the midst of so much prosperity; her great sufferings, terminating in her great joy in the birth of a son; the enthusiasm aroused throughout the world by the child; and finally, still present with her, the prodigious brilliancy of the interview at Dresden. For two years what flattery, what homage, what acclamations, what flourishes of trumpets, what triumphal arches, what magnificence, what Babylonian *fêtes*—and, at bottom, what misery, what inanity, what nothingness!

So far from her husband, guide and protector, Marie Louise found herself isolated and bewildered in the sumptuous Castle of Saint Cloud. It was then that she began to experience the feeling of home-sickness which made her sigh after the country around Vienna.

Up to this time there had been nothing but dazzle and fairy-like splendour. The young Sovereign had only seen the radiant side of the Empire. A vague presentiment made her afraid of making acquaintance speedily with the gloomy side. Napoleon had not been able to communicate for any length of time to his timid spouse the absolute confidence he had in himself. She would have been tempted to apply to all she saw these lines from the *Imitation de Jésus Christ:* "The glory which comes from man passes quickly away. The glory of this world is always accompanied by sadness." Napoleon had just said in his last proclamation: "Russia is drawn on by fate. Her destiny must be accomplished." Alas! it was not Russia, but France, the Emperor, that was drawn on by fate. The Niémen was crossed by his army on the 24th of June. As the national historian sadly remarks: "Glory we shall find at every step; good fortune, alas! had to be laid aside beyond the Niémen." Up to that point nations had regarded Napoleon as invincible, and his young companion at first thought she had married success itself incarnate in a man. This fallacious idea vanished very quickly. The happy days of Marie Louise had passed away.

We have said in dealing with the Empress Josephine that it was a pity Napoleon did not consult her more frequently. We will say the same in regard to the second Empress. Marie Louise was very young, she

had very little experience, and she did not, so it is said, know anything about politics or diplomacy. And yet her husband, who was genius itself, would have done well to have asked her advice. She was pacific by nature; she had no love for adventure, and she would have dissuaded him from the Russian campaign. She, who from her infancy had witnessed the prejudices, passions, and animosity of the Court of Vienna, would have persuaded him not to trust to the promises of Austria. But would Marie Louise, even in the most timid manner, have dared to give any advice, however trivial, to her powerful husband? If a woman of twenty had been bold enough to advise the great Napoleon, the modern Cæsar, the new Charlemagne, would he not have received the audacious child with a smile? And yet she it was who would have been in the right, and who could have prevented the lamentable fall of the gigantic Empire. Genius, whose name is pronounced with so much respect and so much emphasis, what a small thing thou art, and how infinitely little is the greatest of men in the sight of God!

THE END.